Amusement TODAY
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!
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National Roller Coaster Museum is Golden Ticket Awards backdrop

PLAINVIEW, Texas — As it has done with practically everything, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted even the Golden Ticket Awards. In 2020, *Amusement Today* knew voting on food and roller coasters and waterslides wasn't in tune with the sensitive struggle for survival within the amusement industry. Instead of expecting voters to participate in a survey on its core categories, *AT* observed what was going on during the circumstances of last year and created a special set of awards geared toward leadership, innovation and momentum.

As 2021 progressed, it was clear that parks and facilities were emerging from the global crisis. To celebrate the revival of the industry, *AT* knew it was time to bring back the traditional Golden Ticket Awards. The question was … is it too soon for a networking event? The immediate challenge of 2021 became staffing. Then a shortage of parts and shipping delays compounded the progress of parks getting back to normal. It was decided that this wasn't the year to attempt to bring everyone back together for a weekend of networking — and the recent surge caused by the delta variant is indicative that it was the right move.

As *AT* did in 2020, the awards were to be announced online. The backdrop for this year would be the **National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives** (NRCMA). The opportunity to bring awareness to the artifacts and the facility that contains them was a wise move. The complete program of Golden Ticket Awards announcements can be seen at goldenticketawards.com.

COURTESY KRIS ROWBERRY

Many people are not aware of the NRCMA. Board member **Richard Munch** says, "The idea of a roller coaster museum was something discussed during the founding of the **American Coaster Enthusiasts** (ACE) in the late 1970s. There were already circus and carousel museums around the country, but nothing to house collections of artifacts, vehicles, photographs, models and other items pertaining to the largest ride in the parks. The growing complex in Plainview gives us an opportunity to preserve this important part of American recreational history, establish a permanent home for artifacts and save our amusement park legacy for future generations to enjoy. What could be better than that?"

Munch was the initial ACE president, and those who were elected to fill his shoes in the years following began to nurse the idea of a potential museum. By the time **Bill Linkenheimer III** took the role as ACE's sixth president, funds were already being collected to go toward a potential museum.

"At the time [late 1990s], ACE had a lot of moving parts and a lot of things going on," said Linkenheimer. "The idea of operating a museum involved financing it and having a tangible piece of property. It seemed big, so my concern was the financial aspects could potentially bring down ACE. It is a common practice for corporations to set up separate corporations, so the liability doesn't affect the main corporation."

Linkenheimer helped craft a set of bylaws, and by the start of the new millennium, a board of directors was established. A focus was to get the industry involved.

A pivotal time was the involvement of **Larson International**. Initially, they agreed to store many artifacts and collections in warehouses they owned. With the donation of a portion of the company's land, the first building was erected in 2009, again thanks to the donated labor from Larson. Using the funds primarily raised by ACE, this building became a receptacle for major acquisitions. It filled quickly. **Cliff's Amusement Park** stepped up with a donation that allowed for a second building, doubling the size available, plus a climate controlled room for storing blueprints and important historical documents. A third building funded by **Knoebels Amusement Resort** allowed donations that kept coming to find a home.

It was decided at that point that to move forward, a new museum and exhibit space needed to be erected. Dedicated to the memory of **Mark Moore** of **Uremet**, funds were raised to begin on a major expansion. In a silver lining to the global pandemic, Larson management kept workers on the payroll and working, and the 10,000-square-foot addition was built. It now houses a theater, a bar/hospitality room, restroom facilities and an expansive exhibit hall capable of showcasing tall structures. A mezzanine for further displays was included in the design.

Remarkable progress has taken place. Efforts by **Rocky Mountain Construction**, **Skyline Attractions** and **Great Coasters International** have added to the successful momentum in the new expansion. There is still much to accomplish. To help support this preservation of industry history, interested parties can donate at rollercoastermuseum.org/donate.

A display showcasing Busch Gardens' Big Bad Wolf is a fan favorite (above left). A new structure in the museum expansion uses track from AstroWorld's Texas Cyclone, and several coaster cars can be seen on the centerpiece (above right).
AT/TIM BALDWIN

All stories this issue by Tim Baldwin unless otherwise noted

GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS

***AT* NOTEBOOK:** *John W.C. Robinson, jrobinson@amusementtoday.com*

Leadership remains

Robinson

In 2019, *Amusement Today* evaluated and restructured the Golden Ticket Awards. The staff retired categories, updated others and returned the Legend Award to the proceedings. The plan then was to maintain the Golden Ticket Awards and leave the categories unchanged for a few years to establish a stronger consistency.

Then, 2020 was the year that it was. As an industry, it was stopped before it truly began and found many of us scrambling to save the season, protect our workforce and give the future a chance. Through it all, leaders emerged. They were the companies and people that shined a light at the end of the tunnel for the rest of the industry to follow out of the shutdown darkness that COVID-19 brought.

The Golden Ticket Awards in 2020 were restructured, forgoing our usual categories and recognizing these leaders with a Golden Ticket Leadership Award for various branches of our industry.

2021 brought renewed hope, fresh opportunity and the opening of the majority of attractions and parks. The crowds were returning and real hope was alive again. However, rebuilding from the pandemic presented its own challenges. In addition, the uncertainty of what the next day's headlines — or next mutation of the COVID-19 virus — may bring delivered its own set of obstacles.

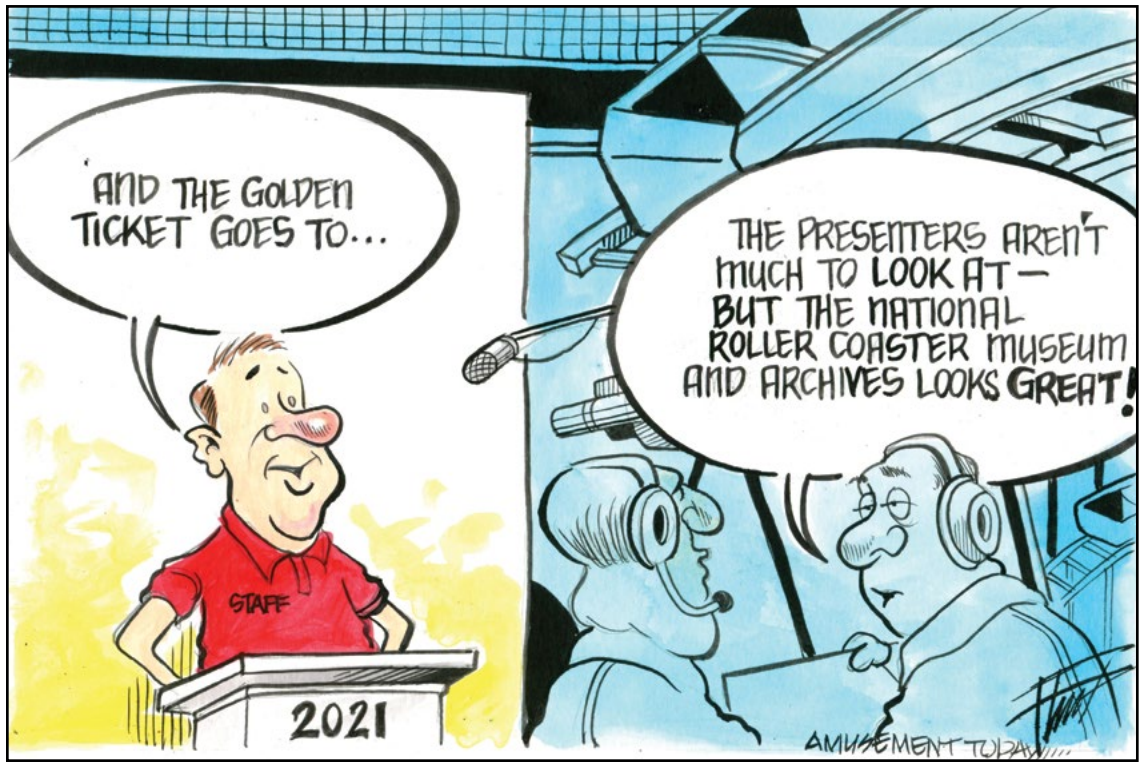
Once again, our industry leaders stepped to the forefront and did their best to pilot suppliers, attractions, guests and employees through the turmoil.

As such, *Amusement Today* has chosen to retain the Leadership Award as a permanent Golden Ticket Awards category in order to continue to recognize those who rise to the challenge and find ways to navigate the obstacles that the amusement industry faces year after year.

As *AT* polled the industry for 2021's nominees, parks, suppliers and individuals were quickly recommended. I'd like to thank those nominees for stepping to the forefront throughout 2021: Brad Thomas of Silver Dollar City; Deno "DJ" Vourderis of Deno's Wonder Wheel Park; John Arie Jr. of Fun Spot America; Ralph S. Alberts Co., Inc.; Six Flags Over Georgia; Dorney Park and Life Floor.

Thank you all for being a leader in 2021. And thank you, in advance, to those who will emerge as leaders in the years to come.

FLINT'S VIEW: *Bubba Flint*


AND THE GOLDEN TICKET GOES TO...
STAFF
2021
THE PRESENTERS AREN'T MUCH TO LOOK AT — BUT THE NATIONAL ROLLER COASTER MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES LOOKS GREAT!
AMUSEMENT TODAY

AMUSEMENT VOICE: *Tim Baldwin, Golden Ticket Awards Communications Coordinator*

Parallels

Baldwin

When the Golden Ticket Awards follow the Olympics, parallels can be drawn.

Just as the year 2020 put so many things on hold, the Olympics were pushed to 2021. Likewise, while *Amusement Today* honored the efforts being displayed within the amusement industry with special categories last year, to seek out winners in core categories when parks were just struggling to open in 2020 — the timing just wasn't right.

Japan did a wonderful job of welcoming athletes, but the tourism draw — even family, friends and spectators were prohibited — didn't materialize as envisioned. *AT* still felt with so many travel restrictions, particularly globally, this wasn't the year to return to a celebratory, weekend networking event. Park budgets have been strained, and staffing challenges have been the industry talk.

Reflect on the situation of Simone Biles. No matter how much one trains or plans or prepares, sometimes things just don't work out. Such a comparison is an easy one this year. Regardless of how hard parks and management planned and were eager to welcome guests back in full force, a rethink around other challenges addressed concerns at hand. Some new rides are still on hold for next season, staffing issues caused certain food outlets and attractions to remain closed in parks this summer. But just as Simone Biles returned to compete, it was the bronze medal that had significant meaning to her. Likewise, just landing on the list of finalists in the Golden Tickets is an honor of its own, particularly in such times.

As much as it is easy to cheer at the television screen to root one's country on to the gold medal, sometimes the more touching stories are those that have worked and worked for their chance to make it onto the podium. To see the smiles — and tears — on their faces for having worked hard enough to earn a silver or bronze medal can reach our hearts more than an athlete taking a fourth or fifth gold. Each year I am energized to see new parks and new attractions make it to *AT*'s list of finalists.

Many of us have been able to return to seeing each other in person. But in the "all hands on deck" scenario parks are dealing with, it may take time for more of us to embrace each other again. *Amusement Today* looks forward to welcoming everyone in person next year.

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columinst(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

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Address:
P.O. Box 5427,
Arlington, Texas 76005-5427, USA
Deliveries: 2004 E. Randol Mill Road #502,
Arlington, Texas 76011, USA
Phone: (817) 460-7220
Fax: (817) 265-NEWS (6397)
Websites:
www.AmusementToday.com,
www.GoldenTicketAwards.com

Founder & Publisher
Gary Slade • (817) 460-7220
gslade@amusementtoday.com

Accounting & Classified
Sammy Piccola • (817) 460-7220
spiccola@amusementtoday.com

Assistant Office Manager, Circulation
Savannah Breen • (817) 460-7220
sbreen@amusementtoday.com

Advertising
Sue Nichols • (615) 477-5432
snichols@amusementtoday.com

Editor & Production Manager
John Robinson • (513) 256-1441
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

Editorial
Tim Baldwin • (972) 697-9745
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Jeffrey Seifert • (817) 460-7220
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

B. Derek Shaw • (717) 843-3050
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

Pam Sherborne • (615) 308-3310
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Monthly Contributors
David Fake, Bubba Flint,
Lottie Minick, Richard Munch,
Janice Witherow

Association Memberships
ACE, AIMS International, ASTM, IAAPA, IISF, IRT/iROC, NAARSO, NEAAPA, NJAA, OABA, PAPA, PACE, SLA, TTIA, WWA

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Wooden coaster guru Larry Bill recognized as Golden Ticket Legend

After more than 30 years in the industry, **Larry Bill** has taken a lot of roller coaster rides. Unlike enthusiasts, he can say he was involved in building those rides.

Larry Bill has been involved in an estimated 75 wooden roller coaster designs in nine countries since his start in the amusement industry in the late 1980s. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the **University of Cincinnati**. For many years, his work was done for **Custom Coasters International** (CCI). He joined the company in 1992 following a few years of work with **Curtis D. Summers, Inc**. When CCI closed its doors in 2002, four of the engineers from CCI decided to form a new company. Bill is one of the founding members of the **The Gravity Group, LLC**.

"In many ways, Larry took us under his wing and helped us grow into the engineers that we are today," said **Korey Kiepert**, engineer and principal. "Early on in The Gravity Group, park owners mainly wanted to talk to Larry, but he was always first to include us in conversations and bring us into the fray. To him, The Gravity Group wasn't just about one person but about the entire team. We all worked together and shared equally in any accolades for a ride."

"As we have worked with Larry for many years, he has guided us in many ways," said **Michael Graham**, engineer and principal. "Directly and indirectly, he made sure we knew that we were a team and that engineering roller coasters was not just the glamour of designing the ride path. He also was an advocate for regarding everyone on the team as part of the excellence of a roller coaster. Inside our team, Larry was known for some phrases that shaped this attitude of hard work. While some of these phrases are familiar, they took specific meaning as they created memories of particular projects and of moments in time."

Such as?

"Dishwashing." Bill made every new employee understand that there is a lot of "lower" regarded work involved with each project that everyone on the team will need to complete for each ride.

"Lay the lead." When he started in a huge room of drafting tables, making drawings was a very time consuming, manual drafting process. His superiors used to say this phrase to him.

"Bulk, son, bulk." When it came to creating design calculation packages on whether to include some of the tiniest details, this phrase always came up in discussion. Bill heard this in his early years, and it never got old.

A favorite of Graham's: *"All hands on deck."*

"First, as there was a huge amount of design, engineering and construction work required for each roller coaster, Larry made it clear that there were times when we needed 'all hands on deck' to get past particular hurdles," Graham recalled. "As the vast majority of the work to design and engineer a roller coaster can be repetitive and mundane, his other phrases played into this effort."

"We have this video that my wife took after my first day at Custom Coasters," said Kiepert. "In it, I told her about Larry and 'wearing many hats' and 'dishwashing.' I think that this mentality has really helped us as we have grown our small business. Instead of just trying to do one job, we have all stepped up and had to do many different jobs, from taking care of the trash to ordering office supplies."

Throughout his career, Bill enjoyed meeting park officials. One for whom he had great respect was **Holiday World**'s **Will Koch**. Three roller coasters were designed for the park, starting with The Raven, which in many respects put the park on the national map when it opened in 1995. He remembers surveying the landscape with Koch and Jeff Mason trying to preserve as many trees as possible. The Legend was a wooden coaster that opened five years later to welcome in the new millennium, and The Voyage opened in 2006. Both The Raven and The Voyage have taken the Golden Ticket for Best Wood Coaster in their operational lives. In 2021, all three wooden coasters are on the chart of top 25 coasters.

Figuring out how Hoosier

Larry Bill (second from right) stands with The Gravity Group team with Mine Blower at Fun Spot America in the background (above). Larry Bill stands atop Fireball at Happy Valley in Shanghai (below). COURTESY THE GRAVITY GROUP

Timberliner trains themed to airplanes are found on Kentucky Kingdom's Kentucky Flyer. AT/TIM BALDWIN

The Raven put Holiday World on the national map for enthusiasts (above left). Hoosier Hurricane at Indiana Beach has an unusual footprint along the edge of Lake Shafer (above middle). Above right, Will Koch and wife Lori (center) hold a Golden Ticket, flanked by Larry Bill and Michael Graham.
AT/TIM BALDWIN, GARY SLADE; COURTESY THE GRAVITY GROUP

Hurricane would fit into **Indiana Beach**'s unique site is also a great memory for Bill. The ride was designed in 1993 and opened the following year. "Electric rock" was a term Bill used when laying out the Hoosier Hurricane coaster. They had brought a "portable" computer that was a heavy all-in-one machine with a small screen. That term is indicative of how far technology has come and its effects on how things are done today.

In its close-to-10 years of existence, Custom Coasters designed 34 scream machines, the majority of which involved Bill on the team. One of the driving forces of The Gravity Group, often inspired by Bill, was the sense of teamwork. The dissolution of Custom Coasters was a time of uncertainty, but the joined forces of the engineers involved was a first step once again.

"In addition to Larry's hard work ethic and his view of teamwork, when we formed The Gravity Group, he was a strong proponent of the group concept that was collaborative and not tied to individual heroics," said Graham. "As most coaster companies are small businesses, he also made sure any potential employees understood that we 'wore multiple hats' and the expectation was that everyone would need to be well-rounded and called upon for random responsibilities."

One of Bill's other phrases makes Graham smile. "Stirring the pot and banging the sides, which meant continuing to aggravate something that should be left alone," he said.

Since forming The Gravity Group, the company has been involved with 28 more roller coaster designs. A sister company, GravityKraft, was also formed to manufacture the Timberliner trains, which is marketed as the industry's only steering roller coaster car. They have become the signature rolling stock on Gravity Group coasters.

Among The Gravity Group's accolades are Golden Ticket Awards. When the category of Best New Ride was introduced in 2005, the company took the first win with Hades at **Mount Olympus Water and Theme Park**. This was followed with The Voyage and two years later with Ravine Flyer II at **Waldameer**.

Over the years, the company has built large thrillers and several family-sized coasters. Even with years of experience and successful projects, Bill had no problem remaining quietly in the background.

"Larry wasn't one to step into the spotlight," noted Kiepert. "He was always very thoughtful and wanted to share credit with everyone involved."

Graham added, "Larry was a steadfast, hard worker who would always jump in to help in any way he could. We have been very privileged to have had worked with Larry for over 20 years, and we think we got more irritated than he did when people called him Bill instead of Larry."

Amusement Today is pleased to add Larry Bill as the newest Golden Ticket Award **Legend**.

2021 Publisher's Picks

Universal Orlando Resort takes honors as the Park of the Year

It requires courage to take a leap of faith.

Nothing has ever struck down the amusement industry more so than the global coronavirus pandemic. In mere weeks, if not a matter of days, amusement parks — and the majority of businesses around the world — were shocked to find it necessary to shut down and close their doors in 2020. Hundreds of questions came to mind, and there was no precedent to look toward to find answers. It had to be figured out a day at a time.

Universal Orlando led a charge. It was the first major theme park to reopen following the COVID shutdown and, as protocols permitted, increased attendance caps to safely allow more visitors. While closed, Universal kept paying salaried and even hourly employees for a substantial period even when not working at the beginning of the pandemic.

The resort opened all its hotels, including the new Endless Summer Resort: Dockside Inn & Suites.

For reasons of their own, many theme parks, once they were allowed to reopen, rescheduled attractions under construction and their opening dates. As 2021 arrived, many new, flashy rides were placed on hold.

But not Universal.

The Jurassic World VelociCoaster moved forward, and national advertising also promoted an opening date set for the early summer. In contrast to Floridian counterparts, the resort's leadership strengths marketed avidly for the return of tourism and indirectly for the amusement industry as a whole. Quite simply the message was "Come have fun."

Like many other parks, Universal could have held back and observed the quieter responses seen from colleagues. The national outreach was inspiring, as was the quality of its new **Intamin** launched coaster. Rave reviews came from all corners of the nation for people who opted to travel to Central Florida to experience the significant new addition. Even the double-sided lockers contributed to its success, bearing in mind the guest experience while waiting.

During the pandemic, the park unveiled The Bourne Spectacular last June.

Not only did the destination move forward with expansion of its existing parks, but it also soon resumed construction of the resort's third theme park, Epic Universe (and fourth overall gate for the resort). In addition to building excitement for the future, the construction of the new park will bring hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs to the area.

It is understandable that during unprecedented times, each park analyzed its own course and took actions it thought best. In acknowledgement of Universal Orlando's courageous spirit, *Amusement Today* is honored to award the Publisher's Pick for **Park of the Year**.

Universal Orlando was the first major park to welcome back visitors under safe protocols. The resort opened the popular VelociCoaster (right) in 2021. COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

Six Flags Over Texas' storytelling wins 2021's Renaissance Award

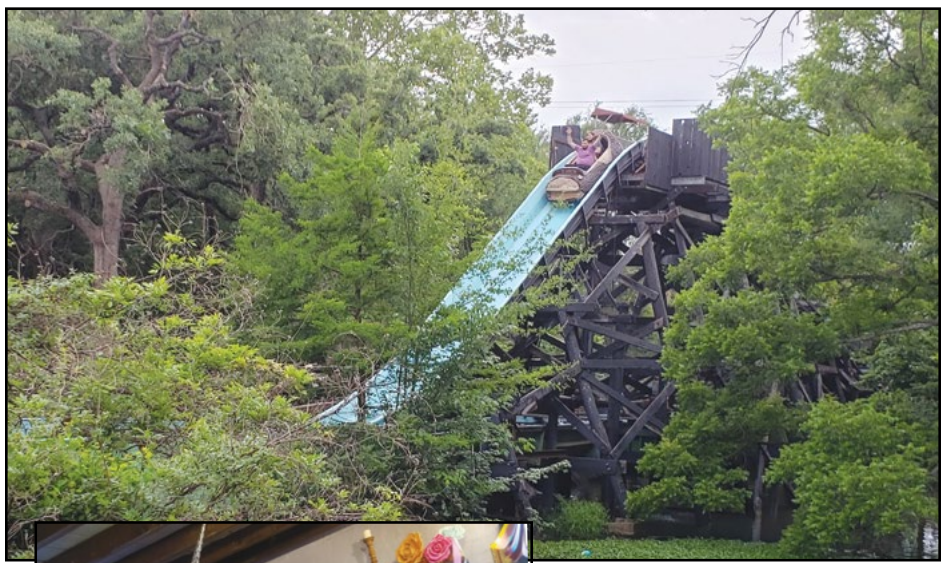
A 60th anniversary is certainly reason to celebrate. **Six Flags Over Texas**, like the rest of the industry, was reacting to a pandemic as it forged its way ahead. New festivals and décor helped set the stage for a celebratory year, but the park went beyond that. There is new life at the park that guests have noticed.

Diving into Six Flags' rich history, several details began re-emerging. A clock tower once again chimed, water features returned offering aesthetic touches, new ride signage freshened attractions and an acknowledgment of treasured pieces of nostalgia found their places throughout the park. Even more impressive was the refurbishment of two 1960s attractions. The world's first **Arrow** log flume, El Asseradero, had remained silent for the past years. The park invested and brought it back to operational status. Once new Park President **Ron McKenzie** was informed that Casa Magnetica, a tilted house built in 1962, was still standing dormant behind closed walls, plans were made to bring in **Magic In The Sky** to do a complete reimagining of the attraction. It reopened to popular acclaim from longtime guests.

Storytelling found its role again in the park. But Six Flags Over Texas isn't slowing down. Plans are for more improvements and immersive elements to continue finding their home at Six Flags. The recent announcement of a reimagined version of the beloved Speelunkers Cave, a dark ride from 1964, is bringing a new storyline to a beloved attraction.

"It will have some really cool elements related to the history of the park, including a Skull Island scene and execution that pays homage to that original attraction," said McKenzie. "There will be some things that are unique and exclusive to Six Flags Over Texas. There's no shooting or targeting; it truly is a storytelling experience."

Construction and enhancements are ongoing and scheduled through the remainder of the year. *Amusement Today* realizes it takes passion and desire to bring a park to its full potential. McKenzie and his team have been noted for their enthusiasm for the park and the value of its historic roots in the regional theme park field. As attention to detail and the embracement of the park's history have brought new energy to the park, *Amusement Today* is pleased to honor that drive bestowing Six Flags Over Texas with the Publisher's Pick **Renaissance Award**.



Arrow's original log flume returned to operational status in 2021 (above). After being boarded up for more than 10 years, Casa Magnetica (left), a rare tilted house attraction, was beautified and brought back to life. AT/TIM BALDWIN

more

TWO #1 GOLDEN TICKET AWARD WINNERS

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PUBLISHER'S PICK: PARK OF THE YEAR
Presented to Universal Studios Florida for their effort to get their properties reopened during the COVID pandemic and debut a new coaster during these difficult challenges

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FOR RECOGNIZING
SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS

Turnstile Award presented to resilient Scene75 Entertainment Centers

Scene75 began as a single, family-run FEC in Dayton, Ohio. In 2012, father and son **Les** and **Jonah Sandler** took a risk, converting a rental building Les owned into a large entertainment center. Scene75 debuted in Dayton, Ohio, to the joy of the local community. That FEC eventually launched a chain of giant FECs, with expansion into: Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio, as well as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

In May of 2019, devastating tornadoes hit the Dayton, Ohio, area and the original Scene75 had to be completely shut down and rebuilt.

Ever the optimist and family-man, Jonah Sandler offered this as part of a statement in the aftermath: "...Despite the physical damage, I am forever grateful of the outcome. No one was injured, and my team members still have homes to return to at night. I am afraid that many of our neighbors were not as fortunate, and our hearts go out to all of them. If there is anything we can do as we work tirelessly to clean and rebuild here, my team and I are ready to support. This is our community. This is our home."

Sandler's belief in community

and the strength in working with and building from the community has been a core value of Scene75 from the very beginning.

While the family was rebuilding its original location, it also expanded into its biggest FEC location yet when it opened the multi-level Scene75 Columbus in late 2019. Taking advantage of the two floors of entertainment, the Columbus expansion marked the chain's largest center to date. Occupying a former anchor store inside of a mall, more than 225,000 square feet of entertainment options delivered family fun.

When the pandemic hit the U.S., Scene75 voluntarily closed its centers until a plan could be assembled to keep guests safe.

"To uphold our core value of putting people first, I announced our decision on March 12 to temporarily close all Scene75 Entertainment Center locations in advance of two of our busiest weeks of the year," said Jonah Sandler.

The expansion of Scene75 Entertainment Centers has seen many of its locations begin adding traditional rides, including the popular Visa family spinning coaster such as Nuclear Rush (above) at Scene75 Columbus. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

The family and their team worked together to develop a plan of sanitizing attractions, masking guests and repositioning equipment to allow for social distancing. The company's Stay Safe Playbook quickly became the gold standard of a plan for an FEC to reopen under the pandemic, and Scene75 locations began to welcome back guests at a rapid pace.

In the midst of the world's recovery, Scene75 reopened its Dayton location.

"We originally had hoped to expand sometime around the fourth quarter of 2019 to first quarter of 2020," explained Sandler. "The tornado changed the plan but also in many ways forced our hand into the expansion as the 36-foot-tall wall that separated the proposed addition from the original floorplan was destroyed."

Not only was it fully repaired from the tornado damage, but significantly expanded with the addition of a second minigolf course, banquet area, **Visa** roller coaster, **Moser** drop tower, **Chance** carousel and more.

In the summer of 2021, Scene75 announced that it would expand yet again, adding a location in the Chicago market. Moving attractions from the now-shuttered Pittsburgh location — as well as adding additional attractions such as a Visa spinning coaster — Scene 75 Chicago is expected to begin welcoming guests in the coming months.

"Les and Jonah Sandler's innovative 'think big' approach to this industry is on display at all of their locations and in everything that they do," said **Earl Heller** of **Rides 4 U**. "They pour their heart and soul into what they do, employing a hands-on approach to make certain that each and every detail is done right."

For dedication to family entertainment, the upholding of family values, expanding on a brand that it built from the ground up, and determination to keep patrons coming despite the challenges of a natural disaster and the recent pandemic, *Amusement Today* is proud to present Scene75 Entertainment Centers with its 2021 Publisher's Pick: **Turnstile Award.**

—John W.C. Robinson

V.I.P. GOLDEN TICKET AWARD PUBLISHER'S PICK AMUSEMENT TODAY TURNSTILE AWARD 2021
SCENE75 ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS
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AmusementTODAY GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS #3 BREAKOUT FEC SCENE75 ENTERTAINMENT CENTER, DAYTON 2021
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Deno "DJ" Vourderis is honored with the 2021 Leadership Award

As *Amusement Today* set aside its traditional categories during the ongoing pandemic in 2020, the staff felt there was still an opportunity to acknowledge exemplary individuals and best practices that were helping the industry move forward. Leadership awards in various categories were created for that unique year. As the industry takes steps toward slowly returning to normalcy, *AT* believed in the Leadership category and decided to continue it on an annual basis.

AT opened up nominations in the spring and submissions for people, parks and companies were inspiring. From those, industry professionals and journalists evaluated the encouraging and heartfelt efforts of each nominee.

Amusement Today is honored to acknowledge "**DJ" Vourderis** of **Deno's Wonder Wheel Park** with the **2021 Golden Ticket Leadership Award.**

Often referred to as an "epicenter" of the impact of COVID-19, New York was one of the hardest-hit areas in the United States during the pandemic. It was a time during which many New Yorkers exemplified their resilience.

"History will remember us all based on what we do now. It isn't the pandemic that will define us; it is how we unite in its aftermath." This was a statement put forth by Deno Vourderis. Through his leadership, the recovery of his property and Coney Island and New York wasn't about ride hardware. It was a mindset — a mindset for looking out for one another and one of acceptance. Through his work ethic, he exhibited his philosophy of appreciating one another, having patience and understanding, and a rejection of wasting one second of time being angry.

"Life is short, and for too many people this past year, tragically too short. Let's build a more considerate world in their memory," he said. "Just as COVID doesn't care where we're from, where we pray, or who we love, neither should any of us. The eyes of generations to come will be watching what happens now. Let's show them who we are."

Through his work ethic, Deno "DJ" Vourderis exhibited the philosophy of appreciating one another, having patience and understanding. These qualities and more earned him the 2021 Golden Ticket Leadership Award.
COURTESY DENO'S WONDER WHEEL PARK

His belief of unity and community was also carried into business practices. When it came time to add a new attraction to the park — a **Vekoma** inverted coaster aptly dubbed "Phoenix" — his business philosophy was that the park not only needed something special and unique but also something that would complement, not compete, with the neighboring friends at Luna Park.

Behind the top spot, **Brad Thomas** of **Silver Dollar City** is recognized.

His heart is what people notice most, which is what guides his vision and his ability to see almost every situation, challenge, problem or opportunity from many angles.

Thomas

Thomas shows his deep belief in people — and in so doing, his 30-year tenure of leadership has served as a valuable compass for teams throughout the Silver Dollar City Attractions in Branson, Missouri.

Dorney Park offered its support of many community efforts.
COURTESY DORNEY PARK

Thomas has guided the largest capital investment decade in Silver Dollar City's history, with more than $100 million invested since 2010. His decisions have included developing cutting-edge rides, investments in people, shows, entertainment, festivals — always remaining focused on the much-loved Silver Dollar City culture, while leading in relevance within the industry.

During the pandemic-related challenges, Thomas' steady approach to keeping employees and guests as safe as possible was unwavering. As directed by him, City "citizens" came to work throughout (closed or not, with "safe" practices in place) and did what needed to be done in whatever areas, supporting one another.

Dorney Park was the third most voted-on nomination.

Throughout the past year and a half, Dorney Park worked to increase its resilience. Prior to opening in July 2020, the park was able to assist in **Lehigh Valley Health Network**'s fundraising efforts for its COVID-19 Emergency Fund. When not able to open, Dorney Park changed gears and hosted a 4th of July Drive-in Fireworks Benefit Show with proceeds donated to LVHN's COVID-19 Emergency Fund. The event was booked completely and raised $15,000. This followed a (virtual) Food Truck Food Drive, which raised $43,000 for **Second Harvest Food Bank** of the Lehigh Valley. In food terms, a quarter of a million meals were provided to the local community.

After the 2020 season ended on Labor Day, Dorney Park worked with the Lehigh County Humane Society and brought their "adoptables" into the park for an adoption photoshoot. The event got full-time staff, yet again, involved with the local community. All pets highlighted were adopted.

In the off-season, Dorney Park assisted the community with a Drive-thru Flu Shot vaccination clinic in the parking lot, served as a girl scout cookie distribution location and also hosted a turkey toss and toy drop for people to donate during the holiday season.

Leadership Award: Honorable Mentions

Life Floor is a foam-rubber flooring tile designed for use in aquatic facilities with barefoot traffic. The beautiful installations provide traction to prevent slips and cushioning to protect falls.

The Life Floor team is committed to safety. There had been playground safety standards for more than 30 years, but nothing for the booming business of splashpads and aquatic play areas — often simply being bare concrete.

Life Floor representatives joined others on safety committees who examined injuries in aquatic facilities in order to bring standards to a much higher level. At the time, there were no safety surface recommendations. Chairing a task group, a Life Forms representative led the charge and took the committee through the appropriate process to develop safer best practices when it came to flooring in splash pads, aquatic playgrounds and around pools.

•

During the pandemic, **John Aire, Jr.**, CEO, **Fun Spot America Parks** frequently met with area government leaders to provide a sounding board for how to manage the pandemic for local businesses and eventually, reopen safely. In addition, he recognized that there were opportunities to improve all three company-owned parks and strategized how to return employees to work. In doing so, each park received critical improvements to infrastructure and all necessary provisions were in place to be prepared to open timely. Arie embraced internal business realignments to ensure all employees had equivalent return-to-work opportunities and personally met with employees to explain business changes. Ultimately, his strategy to retain every employee proved significant as Fun Spot America parks piloted a baseline for reopening procedures amongst Central Florida attractions.

•

Ralph S. Alberts Company is one of America's most resourceful, full-service, multi-faceted custom molders.

RSA's Theodore "Teddy" S. Alberts teddy bear campaign helped bring the industry together, as best as he could after a year of separation from the pandemic, by making park visits all over the world and sharing pictures of his journey and the industry friends he made along the way. The "viral" campaign saw many industry professionals participating, bringing a sense of joy and unity.

•

In 2021, **Six Flags Over Georgia** became the first U.S. theme park to partner with **Goodr** in the fight against food waste.

Organized by Director of In-Park Services **Jason Coleman** and Food and Beverage Operations Manager **Eric Poppe**, the park's partnership with Goodr came from the need to eliminate food waste in a sustainable way. Goodr's team visits Six Flags Over Georgia outside normal park hours multiple times a week during daily operations and on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays during weekend operations to collect and distribute food waste to various local nonprofits.

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2021 GOLDEN TICKET AWARD WINNERS

BEST PARK

1) Europa Park	**Rust, Germany**
2) Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.
3) Universal Islands Of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.
4) Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.
5) Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio

BEST WATER PARK OF 2021

1) Schlitterbahn	**New Braunfels, Texas**
2) Splashin' Safari	Santa Claus, Ind.
3) Rulantica	Rust, Germany
4) Volcano Bay	Orlando, Fla.
5) Hyland Hills Water World	Federal Heights, Colo.

BEST FAMILY PARK OF 2021

1) Dutch Wonderland	**Lancaster, Pa.**
2) Paultons Park	Hampshire, England
3) Idlewild & Soakzone	Ligonier, Pa.
4) Santa's Village	Jefferson, N.H.
5) Sesame Place	Langhorne, Pa.

BEST MARINE LIFE/WILDLIFE PARK OF 2021

1) SeaWorld Orlando	**Orlando, Fla.**
2) Busch Gardens Tampa Bay	Tampa, Fla.
3) Disney's Animal Kingdom	Lake Buena Vista, Fla.
4) Discovery Cove	Orlando, Fla.
5) SeaWorld San Diego	San Diego, Calif.

BREAKOUT FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTER OF 2021

1) Fun Spot America Atlanta	**Fayetteville, Ga.**
2) The Funplex Myrtle Beach	Myrtle Beach, S.C.
3) Scene75 Entertainment Center - Dayton	Dayton, Ohio
4) Austin's	Pflugerville, Texas
5) Scene75 Entertainment Center - Columbus	Columbus, Ohio

MOST BEAUTIFUL PARK OF 2021

1) Dollywood	**Pigeon Forge, Tenn.**
2) Efteling	Kaatsheuvel, The Netherlands
3) Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Va.
4) Europa-Park	Rust, Germany
5) Gilroy Gardens	Gilroy, Calif.

BEST WATER RIDE OF 2021

1) Valhalla	**Blackpool Pleasure Beach**
2) Mystic River Falls	Silver Dollar City
3) Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls	Universal's Islands of Adventure
4) Chiapas	Phantasialand
5) Timber Mountain Log Ride	Knott's Berry Farm

BEST KIDS' AREA OF 2021

1) Dollywood	**Pigeon Forge, Tenn.**
2) Kings Island	Mason, Ohio
3) Canada's Wonderland	Vaughan, Ontario, Canada
4) Efteling	Kaatsheuvel, The Netherlands
5) Paultons Park	Hampshire, England

BEST HALLOWEEN EVENT OF 2020

1) Six Flags Fiesta Texas	**San Antonio, Texas**
2) Busch Gardens Tampa Bay	Tampa, Fla.
3) Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.
4) Europa-Park	Rust, Germany
5) Toverland	Sevenum, The Netherlands

BEST NEW SHOW OF 2021

1) Rock The Night	**Six Flags Fiesta Texas**
2) Down By The Riverside	Silver Dollar City
3) Sweet Summer Nights	Dollywood

BEST NEW ROLLERCOASTER OF 2021

1) Jurassic World VelociCoaster	**Universal's Islands of Adventure**
2) Candymonium	Hersheypark
3) F.L.Y.	Phantasialand
4) Texas Stingray	SeaWorld San Antonio
5) Orion	Kings Island

BEST NEW FAMILY ATTRACTION OF 2021

1) Star Wars: Rise Of The Resistance	**Disney's Hollywood Studios**
2) Mickey and Minnie's Runaway Railway	Disney's Hollywood Studios
3) Mystic River Falls	Silver Dollar City
4) Star Wars: Rise Of The Resistance	Disneyland
5) Knott's Bear-y Tales: Return to the Fair	Knott's Berry Farm

BEST NEW WATER PARK RIDE OF 2021

1) Cheetah Chase	**Splashin' Safari**
2) Riptide Race	Aquatica Orlando
3) Tsunami Surge	Six Flags Hurricane Harbor (Gurnee)
4) Venus Vortex	Lake Compounce
5) Rally Racer	Waldameer Park & Water World

BEST NEW ATTRACTION INSTALLATION OF 2021

1) Star Wars: Rise Of The Resistance	**Disney's Hollywood Studios**
2) Jurassic World VelociCoaster	Universal's Islands of Adventure
3) F.L.Y.	Phantasialand
4) Mystic River Falls	Silver Dollar City
5) The Ride To Happiness by Tomorrowland	Plopsaland De Panne

BEST GUEST EXPERIENCE OF 2021

1) Dollywood	**Pigeon Forge, Tenn.**
2) Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.
3) Holiday World & Splashin' Safari	Santa Claus, Ind.
4) Europa-Park	Rust, Germany
5) Kings Island	Mason, Ohio

BEST DARK RIDE OF 2021

1) Star Wars: Rise Of The Resistance	**Disney's Hollywood Studios**
2) Pirates of the Caribbean: … Sunken Treasure	Shanghai Disneyland
3) Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts	Universal Studios Orlando
4) Twilight Zone: Tower of Terror	Disney's Hollywood Studios
5) Reese's Cupfusion	Hersheypark

BEST WATER PARK RIDE OF 2021

1) Wildebeest	**Splashin' Safari**
2) Krakatau Aqua Coaster	Volcano Bay
3) Mammoth	Splashin' Safari
4) Cheetah Chase	Splashin' Safari
5) Master Blaster	Schlitterbahn

BEST FOOD OF 2021

1) Knoebels Amusement Resort	**Elysburg, Pa.**
2) Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.
3) Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.
4-tie) Epcot	Lake Buena Vista, Fla.
4-tie) Europa-Park	Rust, Germany

BEST CHRISTMAS EVENT OF 2020

1) Dollywood	**Pigeon Forge, Tenn.**
2) Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.
3) Give Kids The World Village	Kissimmee, Fla.
4) SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Fla.
5) Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.

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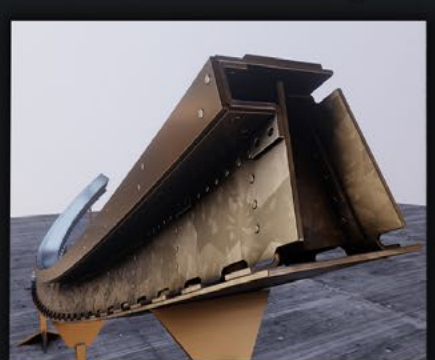
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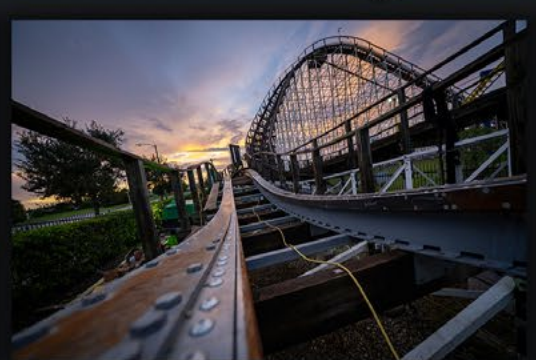
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Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance earns Best New Attraction Installation

Nominees were accepted this spring for **Best New Attraction Installation of 2020/2021**. Because of the pandemic prompting *Amusement Today* to sidestep from its traditional categories, it has been two years since Best New Attraction Installation was presented in September of 2019. From nominations submitted to *AT*, industry professionals voted on the quality of the attraction, the creativity involved and the impact it makes on the amusement industry, as well as the park in which it operates.

These were the top five finalists.

Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance at **Disney's Hollywood Studios** takes the Golden Ticket Award. The incredibly immersive experience has had park fans and *Star Wars* fans clamoring for their chance to ride.

"The A1000 Audio-Animatronics figures inside Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance were asked to do more lifelike movements than we've ever done before," said **Brian Orr**, principal show mechanical engineer, **Walt Disney Imagineering**. "These new figures provide incredible performance and repeatability — you're getting a figure that looks the same on day one as it does in year five or year 20."

Jurassic World Velocicoaster at **Universal's Islands of Adventure** comes in at a strong second. In addition to the rave reviews from guests, this **Intamin** coaster has excellent cycle times, making for great capacity. The ride is in an excellent location: the setting of the second half on the lagoon draws people back to it and allows for great photos. The concealment of the first half behind the raptor barricade, with segments of track leaping into view, is expertly done.

Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance introduces the most advanced state-of-the-art animatronics. COURTESY DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

Much of the vegetation around the structure was preserved. The exceptional ride is a bewildering tangle of track, with excellent speed and unique inversions that make a great finale. The comfortable ride vehicles also score big points with guests.

Close behind is **F.L.Y.** (No. 3) at **Phantasialand**. This Vekoma next-generation flying coaster exceptionally improved upon the genre with its innovative loading process, smooth ride experience and high capacity. Phantasialand's over-over-the-top theming of the Rookburgh area took steampunk to a new level, creating a fascinating and immersive setting for both riders and onlookers. F.L.Y. is also a world's first as it adds two launches to the flying coaster genre. The intertangled and compact layout is used to full effect in the area as well as with the integrated Hotel Charles Lindbergh, which was also new to the area.

Mystic River Falls (No. 4) at **Silver Dollar City** was a bold move. Silver Dollar City replaced an aging rapids ride with a $20 million-plus, state-of-the-art new river attraction that not only set records for the ride genre, but introduced such innovations as a four-sided, rotating lift system (from **RES**), an elevated channel and an exceptional themed environment for both riders and spectators. Mystic River Falls successfully addressed the summer heat and redefined that area of the park with a new look.

The Ride to Happiness at **Plopsaland De Panne** completes the list of top finalists. Themed to the annual Tomorrowland electronic dance music festival held in Belgium, The Ride To Happiness is Europe's first **Mack Rides** Xtreme Spinning Coaster. The attraction holds a record for inversions for a spinning coaster. The fantastical theming adds a cosmic ambiance to the installation, as does the music — a soundtrack based on the composer **Hans Zimmer**'s "Tomorrowland Hymn" which was developed exclusively for the park. One of the marketing attributes of the ride is that by its very nature, it is a different experience with each ride.

F.L.Y. (No. 3). COURTESY PHANTASIALAND

Mystic River Falls (No. 4). COURTESY SILVER DOLLAR CITY

Jurassic World VelociCoaster (No. 2). AT/DAVID FAKE

The Ride to Happiness by Tomorrowland (No. 5). COURTESY PLOPSALAND

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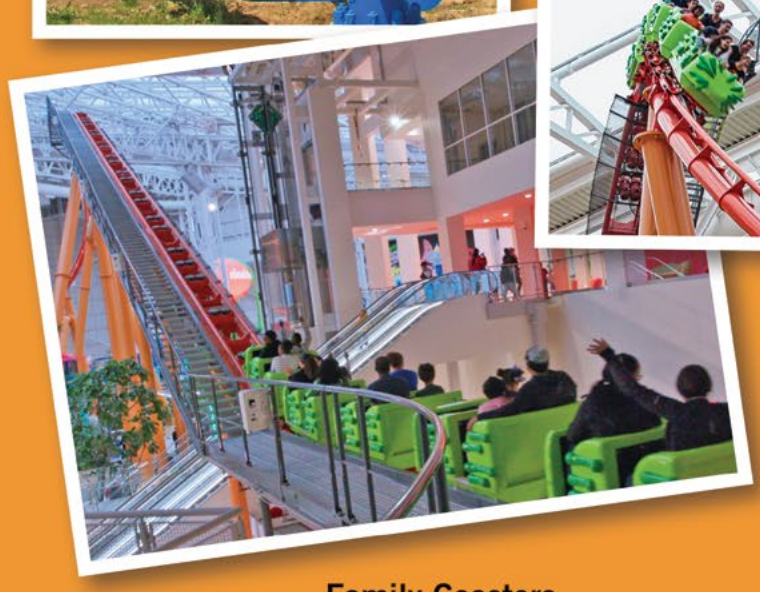

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Golden Tickets for VelociCoaster, Cheetah Chase, Rise of the Resistance

Amusement Today tasks its experienced panelists to analyze, research and enjoy new rides in three categories: roller coasters, family attractions and water park rides. Owing to not voting on these awards during the health crisis, the categories include new rides for 2020 and 2021.

Jurassic World VelociCoaster takes top honors for **Best New Roller Coaster**. Opened to the public this summer, the newest thriller at **Universal's Islands of Adventure** became an immediate sensation. Praised for both its wild intensity and its rideable smoothness, the launched coaster from **Intamin** is a home run. The technology of the clear LCD screens on the second launch give the impression riders are barely escaping velociraptors.

Although ridership was restricted in 2020, **Hersheypark** still debuted **Candymonium** (No. 2). This 210-foot hyper coaster from **Bolliger & Mabillard** has found a sweet spot with coaster fans with its brilliant abundance of airtime.

Flying into **Phantasialand** at No. 3 is a coaster that has been in development for several years. **F.L.Y.** includes an ingenious new loading system and immersive theming. Incorporated into a brand-new area called Rookburgh, this next-generation flying coaster from **Vekoma** has been lauded with accolades for both the incredible steampunk theming and the marvelous ride experience.

Texas Stingray (No. 4) at **SeaWorld San Antonio** beat the pandemic shutdown by just a few weeks. Built by **Great Coasters International, Inc.**, Texas' tallest and fastest wooden coaster brought the return of a wooden coaster to the city of San Antonio.

Orion (No. 5), like

Candymonium, opened last summer with rider restrictions imposed by the pandemic. With a 300-foot drop, it is the tallest roller coaster at **Kings Island**. It also was built by B&M and has enjoyed a substantially larger ridership this season.

There was a comfort level for guests to being outdoors for recreation, particularly in the bright sun. Water parks have experienced solid attendance this season. Over the past two years, new attractions have found favor with fans and visitors.

For **Best New Water Park Ride**, **Splashin' Safari** takes the award with **Cheetah Chase**. The third in the lineup of water coasters at the park, this RocketBlast racing water coaster from **ProSlide** joins two hydromagnetic award-winning coasters at **Holiday World**'s water park.

"Cheetah Chase was such a bright spot for us in 2020. It brought us such joy to introduce families to the newest water coaster in our ranks, and to have a little fun with declaring ourselves the Water Coaster Capital of the World!" exclaimed President and CEO **Matt Eckert**. "It's just the perfect combination for a fun water coaster: a launch that surprises you from the start, dueling elements so you can race against family and friends, plus the water rushes over you at the tops of the hills and SOAKS

Cheetah Chase at Splashin' Safari takes the Golden Ticket for Best New Water Park Ride. COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD

Theming, thrills and an enjoyable ride experience make Jurassic World VelociCoaster the Best New Roller Coaster of 2020/2021. COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

you. I dare you to ride and not laugh at least a little."

The attraction has several uphill blast sections and guests appreciate the fact that the loading platform is nearly at ground level and there are no slide towers to climb.

In second place is **Riptide Race** at **Aquatica Orlando**. According to the park, it is the world's tallest dueling racer waterslide. It is a product of ProSlide.

Tsunami Surge (No. 3) took claim as the world's tallest water coaster at 86 feet. Placed at the front of the new gate to **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor**, now a second gate from **Six Flags Great America**, the massive attraction from **WhiteWater West** serves as an iconic visual for those arriving at the park.

Venus Vortex (No. 4) at **Lake Compounce** gave an undulating waterslide attraction a creative look by modeling it after a venus flytrap. In doing so, it created a signature attraction for its water park.

Rally Racer (No. 5) at **Waldameer Park and Water World** opened in 2020. The multi-lane racing mat slide is stacked to make the best use of real estate. With six lanes, the colorful addition accommodates a large number of guests. It was supplied by ProSlide.

In the category of **Best New Family Attraction**, **Disney's Hollywood Studios** takes the Golden Ticket for **Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance.** The popularity of the ride has guests arriving as early as possible to snag their ride first thing during their visit. The experience as a whole lasts close to 30 minutes when including the preshow. For true fans of *Star Wars*, it is sensory overload.

"It touches on a feeling of exploration — the same feeling that drove Luke Skywalker to join Ben Kenobi on a crazy mission to Alderaan," said **John Larena**, executive creative director, **Walt Disney Imagineering**. "We're going to call on you to be brave."

At the very same park, **Mickey and Minnie's Runaway Railway** (No. 2) has charmed families with a state-of-the-art mix of animatronics, projections and ingenious ride vehicles.

Mystic River Falls at **Silver Dollar City** comes in at No. 3. Reimagining the river rapids experience, this elaborate installation has a section of elevated track and the largest and steepest drop on a rapids ride. The final plunge speeds through the queuing area and into a spectator plaza. The innovative, rotating four-sided tower is a marvel all on its own.

The counterpart to the version in Florida, **Disneyland**'s **Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance** (No. 4) opened a few of months following Walt Disney World. (Of note, Disneyland was closed the majority of 2020.) It is incredibly popular on the opposite coast.

Also in California, **Knott's Bear-y Tales: Return to the Farm** closes out the category finalists. As a throwback to a beloved previous attraction from earlier years at **Knott's Berry Farm**, the new dark ride is whimsically aimed at families, no matter the age.

Among its many accolades, Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance is voted Best New Family Attraction. COURTESY DISNEY'S HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS

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Dutch Wonderland, SeaWorld Orlando hold on to their categories

The category **Best Family Park** concentrates on facilities where parents and kids ride together, rides don't go upside down and an emphasis on younger guests keep thrills tailored to their tastes.

As a first-time winner in 2019, **Dutch Wonderland** in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, takes the Golden Ticket Award once again.

"Winning a second Golden Ticket Award for Best Family Park is something all of us at Dutch Wonderland are incredibly proud to receive," said General Manager **James Paulding**. "It confirms we're delivering a world-class product and that our efforts to cultivate amazing family experiences are paying off in big ways. Dutch Wonderland has excited and delighted families for many decades, and we're thrilled to make more memories as we continue to grow."

The park offers three coasters kids can ride with parents, water park attractions, and a wide variety of rides that young kids enjoy.

Family-sized coasters are just the right thrill at Dutch Wonderland (above left). Paultons Park has spectacular displays of creativity and whimsy incorporated into its attractions (inset). AT/TIM BALDWIN

Paultons Park in England scores its highest ranking ever at No. 2. Beautifully landscaped, the park offers many rides for families, including six coasters, all of which can be enjoyed with parents. The Peppa Pig World section is immensely popular with younger ones. New for this year was Tornado Springs, which offered eight new experiences.

Pennsylvania's **Idlewild & SoakZone** (No. 3) is a fan favorite. The forested setting and wide range of activities for kids have made the park a treasure for almost a century and a half. Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood brings in fans of the television program.

Santa's Village (No. 4) in Jefferson, New Hampshire, is new to the list. The park delights young and old with its Christmas-themed attractions, water park and opportunities to feed live reindeer. The family-owned park makes it a treat to celebrate Christmas year-round.

Sesame Place (No. 5) in Pennsylvania utilizes the *Sesame Street* television brand to theme numerous rides, including a perfect family coaster from **The Gravity Group** and water park attractions.

Best Marine Life/ Wildlife Park has generated a bit of sibling rivalry. **SeaWorld Orlando** holds on to the Golden Ticket, but sister park **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay** has moved up into second place, closing in on its fellow family member in Florida. SeaWorld has more ocean-centered animal life; Busch has one of the nation's

See HOLD, page 22

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Palace ENTERTAINMENT

Marine life interactions are a big part of a visit to SeaWorld Orlando (top left). In addition to great rides, animal encounters are a significant part of the Busch Gardens Tampa Bay experience (far left). Disney's Animal Kingdom offers multiple animal encounters throughout the park (adjacent left). COURTESY SEAWORLD ORLANDO, BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA, WALT DISNEY WORLD

HOLD

Continued from page 20

most enjoyable zoos located within the center of the park where guests can observe and interact with animals — sometimes from rides.

"We are thrilled to once again receive this award as the best Marine/Wildlife Park," said **Kyle Miller**, SeaWorld Orlando park president. "SeaWorld's core mission is to inspire our guests to protect animals and the wild wonders of our world, and we are grateful to be recognized for that contribution. Congratulations to our sister park, Busch Gardens for taking the number two slot as a partner in our efforts to educate and inspire."

In addition to the animals enjoyed at the park, both properties are about to open new coasters in early 2022. SeaWorld will debut a multi-launch coaster from **Premier Rides**; Busch will open a 206-foot coaster from **Rocky Mountain Construction**.

Just a smidgen behind the two leads is **Disney's Animal Kingdom** (No. 3). Guests can observe animals while on safari or on foot. In addition to real-live animals, dinosaurs and characters from *A Bug's Life* and *Avatar* make their fantasy footprint on the guest experience.

Discovery Cove (No. 4) offers person-to-animal experiences in a special way with guests actually getting into the water with dolphins and other sea life. The luxurious park has ways to relax, have fun and interact.

SeaWorld San Diego (No. 5) pops on the chart in 2021. The original SeaWorld park has been entertaining guests since 1964. It will open a new **Bolliger & Mabillard** dive coaster in 2022.

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Fun Spot America Atlanta sets itself apart as Breakout FEC in 2021

Family entertainment centers are likely to be the most accessible forms of family entertainment as they often are located close to neighborhoods. Each year, many of them make major investments, upgrades and improvements to elevate their offerings to the public.

Fun Spot America wins the Golden Ticket Award for **Breakout FEC of 2021**.

When the Fun Spot America chain bought Fun Junction USA about 20 miles south of Atlanta in 2017, the goal was to grow the property and increase attendance. The park has done that. Under the new ownership, the facility received a fresh look and has continued to increase attractions for guests. In addition to miniature golf, batting cages and traditional FEC offerings, the Fun Spot management has added a children's coaster, Ferris wheel and a 40-foot-tall go-kart track. New food offerings and new arcade games have improved the level of selection for families as they visit.

A 40-foot-tall go-kart track called Samson is one of the newer additions to Fun Spot America in Fayetteville. COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

"Receiving the Breakout FEC of 2020-2021 is an honor that speaks to the hard work and dedication of our extraordinary team of workers at our Fayetteville, Georgia, location who practice the Golden Rule by treating our guests the way we would want to be treated," said **John Arie Jr.**, CEO, Fun Spot America. "Fun Spot America began as an FEC and has used that solid foundation as a springboard to build bigger, more exciting rides, games and attractions. Our phenomenal success in Atlanta has allowed us to enter into an agreement with **Rocky Mountain Construction** to build a HUGE world-class roller coaster for the coming year."

Once that large coaster is installed, it will take the property more into the realm of being an amusement park along the lines of its Florida counterparts.

The Funplex Myrtle Beach (No. 2) is a brand new facility in South Carolina that includes Off-the-Coast Beach Bar and Grill. All ride attractions — including some sizable thrillers — are outdoors in 18,000 square feet of space.

Scene75 Entertainment Center Dayton (No. 3) not only had to overcome the pandemic but also a tornado. Following significant damage, the Dayton location reopened as a newer and brighter facility. The center expanded its offerings with an additional 40,000 square feet, which brought the venue to a total of 164,000 square feet in size. New attractions included a drop tower, roller coaster and an 18-hole miniature golf course. A large banquet center was also added.

Austin's (No. 4) in Pflugerville, Texas, built an entirely new indoor expansion that featured more adult entertainment and includes the Revl Social Club bar and grill. In addition to an indoor roller coaster and XD theater, the facility offers adult recreation like darts, billiards, ping pong and — (yes) curling.

Scene75 Entertainment Center Columbus (No. 5) is a two-story FEC with 225,000 square feet of indoor entertainment. It is the largest of the Scene 75 chain locations. The property has a two-story laser tag arena, immersive lighting, and an intriguing Illusions Restaurant and Bar themed to legendary magicians and escape artists.

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Six Flags Fiesta Texas rocks out with the Best New Show of 2021

When the global pandemic stopped the industry in its tracks in 2020, one of the first things sacrificed for the parks lucky enough to open was indoor theaters. Outdoor venues had a sprinkling of offerings. While certainly not back to normal, theme parks provided more entertainment this year. As one would expect, using the advantages of outdoor spaces was still the most common approach.

In the spring, *Amusement Today* invited the amusement industry to nominate shows for consideration of **Best New Show of 2021**. The five finalists boasted a diverse set of strengths — from live musical performances to nighttime extravaganzas to a parade. *AT* doubled the size of its voting panel, and dedicated participants watched all nominees before sending in their choices for 1st, 2nd and 3rd. From those, points were tabulated, and a clear winner came out on top.

"Rock The Night" was a new nighttime finale show at Six Flags Fiesta Texas. In partnership with **Magic In The Sky**, the park thrilled guests with a multi-sensory spectacular with an overload of aerial fireworks. The hard rock show took the Golden Ticket.

"Rock The Night was a culmination of what we've done best with our closing night show," said **Ben McTyre**, director of entertainment. "Lasers, fireworks, fountains, flames and more — all added to a pulse-pounding rocking soundtrack. It was such a high-energy finale to close out our guests' visits. People have come to expect big things from our closing show, and we couldn't have been prouder of the end result. It was so much fun. Our team loved it as much as our visitors."

"Rock The Night" was a multi-sensory experience of flames, projections, fountains, fireworks and more — all set to a hard rock soundtrack that had visitors cheering. COURTESY SIX FLAGS; AT/TIM BALDWIN

Using the park's signature quarry walls, the visual pop from projections synched energetically to rocking hit songs, accented by numerous effects, including an abundance of pyrotechnics.

"Down By The Riverside" at **Silver Dollar City** featured a mix of country, pop and gospel performed by live singers, dancers and musicians. The toe-tapping performance took second place. The Branson theme park is known worldwide for a wide range of live shows.

Best seen from the park's Wildwood Grove, visitors to **Dollywood** were treated to "Sweet Summer Nights." The aerial show was balanced between fireworks and lighted drones to work in conjunction with broadcast music within the area. The night show came in at the No. 3 position.

Texas summers are hot, but that didn't stop live singers, dancers and band members from boot skootin' and belting out country hits in "Deep In The Heart" over the summer months. Despite the show being outdoors, longtime fans commented that it was one of the strongest productions **Six Flags Over Texas** had put on in years. It placed at No. 4.

Completing the finalists is **Cedar Point**'s "Celebrate 150 Parade." As showcased in *AT*'s August issue, the parade wowed guests with a dozen elaborate floats, more than a hundred live performers, a signature soundtrack and lots of action. The parade capitalized on the park's celebration of 150 years, and it was considered a perfect evening finale to close out visitors' Cedar Point experience.

"Down By The Riverside" (No. 2) performed by Silver Dollar City's Rivertown Ramblers was popular. COURTESY SILVER DOLLAR CITY

A note to amusement industry facilities, nominations will open next spring for Best New Show of 2022. *Amusement Today* encourages parks to submit their best show for consideration by the Golden Ticket Awards' elite panel.

Perfectly capturing the nostalgia of Cedar Point's 150th anniversary, "Celebrate 150 Parade" was an eye-popping treat each night during the summer (above left). Above middle, the night skies took flight during Dollywood's "Sweet Summer Nights" (No. 3). "Deep In The Heart" (No. 4) featured songs all about the state of Texas on an outdoor stage at Six Flags Over Texas (above right). COURTESY CEDAR POINT, DOLLYWOOD; AT/TIM BALDWIN

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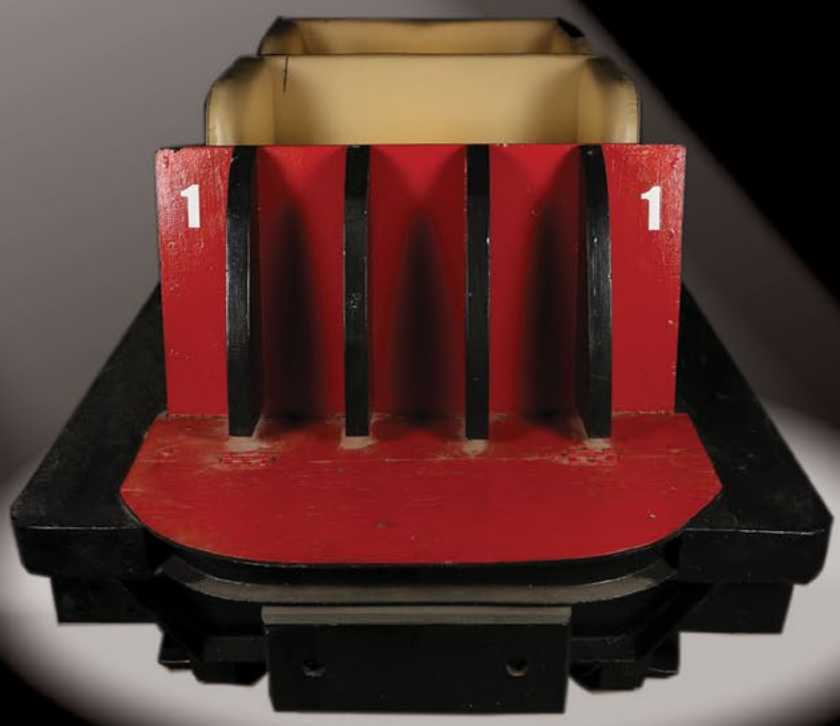

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#13 Intimidator® 305 Kings Dominion®
#19 Diamondback – Kings Island®
#20 Magnum XL-200 – Cedar Point
#23 Intimidator® – Carowinds

Best Waterpark
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#21 Shivering Timbers® Michigan's Adventure®

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#5 Kings Island

Most Beautiful Park
#5 Gilroy Gardens™

Best Waterpark Ride
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#5 Orion® – Kings Island

Best Water Ride in a Park
#5 Timber Mountain Log Ride Knott's Berry Farm

Best New Family Attraction
#5 Knott's Bear-y Tales Return to the Fair Knott's Berry Farm

Best New Show
#5 Celebrate 150 Spectacular Parade Cedar Point

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Best Halloween, Christmas event Golden Tickets celebrate efforts

Even after a year has passed, it is not too difficult to remember the challenging aspects of 2020. Many parks weren't even able to open that year. Those that could welcome guests may have closed earlier in the fall. Understandably, the emotional climate of the world was drastically different last season.

Some parks didn't offer Halloween events, but those that did put in major efforts to make it appropriate for the times. It was a wide-open playing field like never before. *Amusement Today* applauds those efforts and kept the **Best Halloween Event of 2020** award intact.

The majority of Six Flags parks reimagined the normal Fright Fest events into HallowFest during the pandemic, and they were huge successes.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas takes the Golden Ticket for 2020's events. With indoor venues closed, shows and haunts had to be reworked. Outdoor entertainment and scare zones filled the need for spooky holiday fare.

"The industry understood that 2020 was a completely different time. Halloween events needed a rethink to be sensitive to what was going on," said Park President **Jeffrey Siebert**. "Our team reimagined everything! HallowFest was immensely popular. Focusing on outdoor entertainment and scare zones proved very successful. Our Frightful Finale was such a spectacular hit — using projections on the park's quarry walls, pyro, the witches from *Hocus Pocus* and even the chandelier from *Phantom of the Opera* swinging down from the cliff — we want to keep it for 2021 as we return to our Fright Fest event."

Busch Gardens Tampa Bay rose to second place. Not holding back on offering Halloween scares, the Central Florida park is recognized on the chart for the first time.

"Halloween has always been one of my favorite events through my years in the industry," said Busch Gardens Park President **Neal Thurman**. "The Entertainment team at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay is among the best in the business. From creative story telling at our haunted attractions to the humorous script writing to the planning and installation of the park décor, the Busch Gardens Tampa Bay team has Howl-O-Scream covered. If you thought the previous Howl-O-Screams were great events, wait until you experience Howl-O-Scream 2021."

The Busch team works tirelessly throughout the year to develop new haunt themes and creative stories and bring them to life. At Busch Gardens the entire park is re-themed with a Halloween overlay — from haunted houses and scare zones to the shows, food, and merchandise available, the event encompasses every department. Three new incredibly creepy haunted houses and new scare zones await guests in 2021.

Six Flags Great Adventure (No. 3) also provided startling screams in 2020 with its rendition of HallowFest. Europe had its own restrictions in place, which canceled many Christmas events, but for Halloween, **Europa-Park** came in fourth, and **Toverland** rounded out the top five finalists.

Christmas has become a huge business for the amusement industry. When many parks were shuttered during the cold months, many have found great success in draping the park in lights and décor. While 2020 offered some challenges for up-close experiences because of social distancing, the outdoor environment still leaned into the holidays.

Remaining the champion was **Dollywood**, who has controlled this category since its inception.

"Smoky Mountain Christmas is one of the cornerstones of the Dollywood brand. Christmas is such a special time for all of us, and we want to be that place where our guests can come together and enjoy the holidays as a group," said **Wes Ramey**, public relations manager. "We all have our favorite Christmas memories; it is our hope that for those who visit us during that time of year that we've helped make some of those fond memories to share many years from now. There is something about 5 million Christmas lights that has a way of putting you in the spirit."

Dollywood's sister park, **Silver Dollar City** (No. 2), finishes strong in this category as the park exemplifies the holiday magic around every corner. Each year the park outdoes itself when it comes to decorations. Christmas in Midtown, Rudolph Christmas Parade and Joy on Town Square with a new 80-foot tree are recent additions to the award-winning event.

For the very first time, **Give Kids The World Village** (No. 3) introduced Night of a Million Lights. During a hard year when the Village could not host families like it typically does and with fundraising efforts strained, creative energy went into a new Christmas event available to everybody. It was well-received.

"Night of a Million Lights exceeded our every expectation," said **Pamela Landwirth**, Give Kids The World president. "It was a beacon of hope in the midst of the pandemic, surpassed our fundraising goals, and showcased our mission to nearly 100,000 prospective donors and partners. Most importantly, the event will help us continue to create the happiness that inspires hope for countless critically ill children and their families."

Closing out the holiday finalists are **SeaWorld Orlando** (No. 4), which retains its placement, and **Six Flags Great Adventure** (No. 5), now recognized as a newcomer to the category.

High-energy entertainment (above left) and outdoor scare zones (above right) made for a perfect Halloween mix in 2020 at Fiesta Texas. Even with social distancing, Santa met with families at Dollywood in 2020 (below). AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

Christmas in Midtown is just one area of Silver Dollar City's Old Time Christmas. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Busch Gardens finds itself on the chart for the first time in an impressive No. 2 position. COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS

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Thank you Amusement Today and Golden Ticket voters for honoring Six Flags Fiesta Texas with the award for Best Halloween Event!

Hugo Loyola receives the 2021 AIMS International Safety Award

The **AIMS International Safety Award** is presented annually to the individual or organization that demonstrates leadership, innovation and foresight in improving safety in the amusement industry. With safety as the industry's number one concern for guests and employees worldwide, efforts in improving safety are shown in many forms: the design and implementation of new products and technology, the development of safety education programs and training, and by exemplary leadership in influencing others. The **AIMS International** staff and board of directors are proud to announce the 2021 recipient of this prestigious award: **Hugo Loyola**.

Hugo Loyola's dedication to amusement industry safety has earned him the 2021 AIMS International Safety Award.
COURTESY AIMS INTERNATIONAL

Loyola was born in a mining camp in the country of Chile and traveled to the U.S. as a high school exchange student in La Crosse, Wisconsin. In 1994, he returned to Chile and studied Mechanical Engineering and Fluid Dynamics. As a student, he developed an intravenous blood oxygenator prototype in collaboration with **Carnegie Mellon University** in the U.S. and the **University of Santiago** in Chile.

After graduation, Loyola worked as a manager in the field of plastic transformation in Chile and later in Luxembourg, where he worked on automation concepts in fast mold change robot assistance. In 2004, he worked in Chile as a maintenance manager in the non-metallic mining sector. Later, he attended a training course in Reliability Centered Maintenance in Hattingen, Germany. In 2007, he joined a multinational company in the engineering business where he held the position of quality assurance (QA) manager of the corporate supply chain. QA was carried out under his supervision in Australia, India, England, and South Africa. In 2010, he joined another multinational company in the energy and automation sector, where he held the position of contract manager and participated in a Project Manager course in Santiago, Chile.

Since 2015, Loyola has been working in **Fantasilandia Amusement Park** in Santiago, Chile, where he started as a maintenance manager. He led and formed high-performance teams, establishing communication channels, standards, methodologies, and technologies that ensure employee safety and ensure the quality control of processes, as well as sustained increase in productivity and digital transformation. In 2019, he became the corporate process manager of the Diversur Group, which includes Fantasilandia, an amusement park, and Happyland, an FEC. In this position, he performs annual audits to improve the company processes in an effort to reduce or eliminate operational risks in all areas of the business. Lately, his focus has been on robot process automation as a way to increase efficiency and safety.

His background and experiences as a miner gave him the strong skills and determination to become an advocate for employee safety and an expert in component failure mode analysis. This has given him the opportunity to collaborate with AIMS, IAAPA and ACOLAP.

Loyola has been a member of the AIMS International Safety Seminar faculty since 2019, where he has taught many courses on inspection, process improvement and digital technology.

His latest contribution to the amusement industry was the coordination of 20 hours of Spanish-language safety, operation and maintenance topics at the 2021 AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar. This was the first time these courses have been offered in Spanish at an AIMS International seminar. He is working on a Spanish translation project which will allow AIMS to offer more virtual courses in Spanish-speaking countries.

His contributions to the industry don't stop with AIMS. He is a current member of the IAAPA Facilities Operations Committee North America and also a member of the IAAPA Safety Committee of Latin America and the Caribbean. As a member of both committees, he has taught a variety of virtual and in-person safety classes, workshops and webinars.

He is also a valuable contributor to ACOLAP and SENA, which deliver weekly seminars to the Colombian park employees, a program for which he collaborates as co-instructor.

Loyola joins an impressive and exclusive group of past AIMS International Safety Award winners: **Harold Hudson** in 2016, **Har Kupers** in 2017, **Patrick Hoffman** in 2018, **Ronald Burback** in 2019 and **John Riggleman** in 2020.

—Mary Jane Brewer, AIMS International

Dollywood snags Most Beautiful Park, Knoebels retains Best Food

With more than two decades of Golden Ticket Awards history, there are moments when it seems as if a winner of a specific category is unbeatable. When that happens, it comes as a shocking surprise, but it goes on to demonstrate that parks continue to exemplify the Best of the Best, and the desire to offer an outstanding product for park visitors is the primary goal.

After years of being a finalist, Dollywood takes Most Beautiful Park. Dolly Parton looks over the Coat of Many Colors topiary (above right). AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT; COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

For the first time, **Dollywood** takes **Most Beautiful Park**. In 2020, the Tennessee theme park introduced its Food and Flower Festival. During that event, topiaries added to the park's exquisite landscaping, making the park even more breathtaking.

"As a little girl growing up in the Great Smoky Mountains, I always thought about how this was a place that folks from around the world would love to visit," said **Dolly Parton**. "Ever since we opened Dollywood in 1986, people have told us how special this place is because of the friendly people and the beautiful mountains that God has blessed us with. We make sure to take all that beauty that surrounds us and bring it right down into the middle of the park. We're truly surrounded — all the way around — by the Smokies!"

Efteling in The Netherlands has been a long-running finalist in this category since 2002, and it has pushed itself back into the No. 2 slot. The park's floral arrangements are renowned.

Busch Gardens Williamsburg, the long-running award winner — and the only park to ever take the Golden Ticket for Best Landscaping and Most Beautiful — still finished strongly in third, barely nudged out by Efteling.

Another strong contender is **Europa-Park** (No. 4). The German theme park's lush landscaping is spread throughout the property. The same can be said for **Gilroy Gardens** in California, a park that is known for Circus Trees, whimsical hedges and beautiful flowers. It completes our five finalists.

Asked to recognize a park for **Best Guest Experience**, fans evaluated properties on ride operations, friendliness, cleanliness and value. For a second time, Dollywood snagged the category. Park connoisseurs feel Dollywood has a great mix — something for everyone, all wrapped up in a crowd-pleasing experience.

"We are proud of our second consecutive Best Guest Experience award," said **Eugene Naughton**, president of **The Dollywood Company**. "We place a lot of focus on ensuring our guests have the best possible time when they are here. I've said it many times, but we have the friendliest employees in the entire industry — we won the Golden Ticket Award for Friendliest Park seven years in a row before the award was reimagined. Additionally, both our landscaping and our house and grounds teams do a phenomenal job to ensure the park is clean and that our flowers and landscaping are always green and pristine! Both teams worked exponentially harder to deliver us through a very difficult 2020 season, so this award is a testament to their hard work."

The Garlic Butter Bacon Burger is one of numerous delicious options at Knoebels Amusement Resort. COURTESY KNOEBELS

Coming in at No. 2, **Knoebels Amusement Resort**'s family-friendly environment is nestled among a grove of trees with reasonably priced food, fantastic coasters, a hospitable atmosphere and classic rides — all at a great value. This is the park's first time on the chart in this category.

Holiday World (No. 3) has been an advocate of "clean and friendly" for decades, even to the point of including it in their advertising. The park continues to maintain its core values.

Europa-Park places No. 4 in this category as well. The park's wide range of offerings, from rides to foods, coupled with some of the best park operations on the planet exceeds guest expectations.

New to this chart is **Kings Island**. Completing the top five, the Ohio theme park is wrapping up its 50th season, with a 50th anniversary planned for 2022. Great atmosphere, great rides, great food and a fun and festive environment has developed a local fan base that would be the envy of any park.

The kindness of its hosts and cleanliness of the park contribute to Dollywood's second win of Best Guest Experience. COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

Best Food has been a long-fought tug of war between Knoebels and Dollywood. Knoebels takes the prize once again in 2021.

"One of our slogans is, 'For all ages, for all times.' Maybe we will pen a new slogan that says, 'For every appetite, for every meal!' said owner **Dick Knoebel**. "Whether you're craving a meal reminiscent of Sunday dinner at Grandma's or traditional park fare, we have it! All joking aside, thank you to the voters who inspire us to serve up a variety of quality, affordable food options. Now, it's back to the kitchen to figure out what food we can put on a stick next!"

As expected, Dollywood places second, nipping at the heels of Knoebels. Everyone at the park, however, is probably nipping, chomping and loving the cinnamon bread.

Silver Dollar City, a wonderful playground in the Ozarks, is not only known for its great rides and lively music, but it is a sheer joy to eat through the park all day long. In 2020, the park opened a brand-new, huge smokehouse with dining spaces overlooking its new Mystic River Falls attraction.

Europa-Park also finds itself on the chart once again (all three times on this page). With more than 40 eateries and outlets in the park, not to mention award-winning restaurants in its resort hotels, guests find much to love in terms of culinary offerings.

Just a hair behind the German theme park (*AT* finds it close enough to call it a tie), **Walt Disney World**'s **Epcot** closes out the five finalists. The park's World Showcase alone has an incredible range of international cuisines, not that the front half of the park is any slouch.

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Crowd-pleasing elements give Europa-Park, Schlitterbahn top honors

Making your way to the top is an enormous challenge. Staying at the top is an entirely different challenge once there. For the seventh time, **Europa-Park** has claimed the Golden Ticket Award for **Best Park**.

The park's first appearance on the chart was in 2005. It remained a Top Ten finalist every year following. In 2011 it moved up to third place for the first time. The following year it took the No. 2 spot. Not resting on its laurels, it inched forward, closing the gap between the top rung. Missing by one percentage point in 2013, Europa-Park took the Golden Ticket in 2014, and following the 2020 absence of the Golden Ticket core categories continues its winning streak.

Located in Rust, Germany, the resort boasts six top-tier hotels featuring renowned restaurants. Since the last Golden Ticket Awards networking event in 2019, the resort has opened a second gate, **Rulantica**, a premiere indoor water park (see *Amusement Today*, February 2020).

"We are thrilled that Europa-Park was chosen by the voters to receive the Golden Ticket for

Best Park," said **Michael Mack**, managing partner.

"We know that if you want to be a leader, you always have to be moving forward. We have some amazing plans coming in the future," said **Thomas Mack**, managing partner. "We also wish to recognize the entire industry for their amazing efforts to get through this pandemic and provide much-needed entertainment."

"We are inspired by the industry and its team members who have risen to the occasion," added Michael Mack.

Following in Europa-Park's footsteps, **Dollywood** has used a similar gameplan and has worked itself up the ladder. Firmly planted in the No. 2 spot, the Tennessee resort has announced major investments are in the future, some of which have been revealed, others will be released when the timing is right.

Universal's Islands of Adventure breaks into the top five finalists at the No. 3 spot. With the opening of Jurassic World VelociCoaster to spectacular reviews, the Orlando destination further emphasized

Europa-Park (above) takes the win for Best Park for the seventh time. At right, a mix of beauty, shows, rides and food has become a popular formula for Dollywood (No. 2). AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT, TIM BALDWIN

▸ **See HONORS, page 38**

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Schlitterbahn has been undefeated for 23 years for Best Water Park (above left). Over the past three decades, Splashin' Safari (No. 2) has grown to close to 40 acres (above right). COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN; AT/TIM BALDWIN

HONORS

Continued from page 36

itself as a must-do destination.

Knoebels Amusement Resort (No. 4) claims an atmosphere like no other with its forested hillside terrain and backwoods setting. The gem of a park has captivated fans with its traditional-park feel, superb ride offerings, signature attractions and affordable pricing.

Cedar Point, a 16-year Golden Ticket holder, celebrates more than 150 years of entertaining guests. Although delayed, the sesquicentennial anniversary was delivered in full fanfare in 2021. The park is known for its extraordinary arsenal of roller coasters.

The only undefeated category from the first year of the Golden Ticket Awards in 1998 is **Best Water Park**. **Schlitterbahn** has capitalized on its unique setting on the banks of the Comal River and its spring-fed waters and has garnered a loyal fanbase. This signature environment coupled with innovative and cutting-edge attractions redefines the term "one of a kind." It is the park's 23rd win in this category.

"There are countless associates who have worked so hard over the years to make Schlitterbahn the iconic Texas attraction that it is today," said **Darren Hill**, vice president and general manager of Schlitterbahn Waterparks & Resorts. "From lifeguards and kitchen staff to admissions and operations associates, they have worked together to make this happen. Over the past 40 years, we've offered fun for the whole family, and now, as a part of the **Cedar Fair** family, we look forward to building on that rich tradition and legacy for Schlitterbahn guests and associates alike."

Splashin' Safari, **Holiday World**'s water park, bumps back up into the second-place position in 2021. Started as a simple water park in 1993, Splashin' Safari has grown to almost 40 acres and boasts award-winning water coasters, now a trio of such thrilling attractions. Water slides in the park have become known for being "big," and the water park is a solid attendance driver in the summer months.

Two water parks place themselves on the chart for the first time. Europa-Park's Rulantica takes the No. 3 spot. Opened in November of 2019, the 350,000-square foot park offers year-round fun thanks to its heavily themed and immersive indoor environment. For 2021, Svagulrok, a highly-themed outdoor area, was added. Visitors have been predictably wowed by Europa-Park's level of theming and atmosphere. **Hyland Hills Water World** (No. 5) outside of Denver is another first-timer in the list. Famous for dark-ride-style attractions, the massive park also boasts the claim of "America's Largest Water Park." With way much more to do than can be accomplished in a single day, the park is a mix of old-school fun and high-tech modern thrillers.

Volcano Bay (No. 4), Universal's water park in Orlando, is the most themed water park on the list of finalists. With an iconic centerpiece of a towering volcano, the park was built with the intent of putting in high-capacity rides to have major throughput. Volcano Bay opened in 2017.

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The Mack Family is thrilled Europa-Park was chosen by the voters to receive the 2021 Golden Ticket Award for Best Park! And we thank Amusement Today for organizing these awards.

We are all winners

But we also wish to take this opportunity to thank our entire industry for their amazing efforts to get through this pandemic and to provide much needed entertainment to our beloved guests. It certainly hasn't been easy and we recognize all the devastating effects of the pandemic at every level.

We are inspired by the stories of how this industry and its members have risen to the occasion, changed plans, adapted business models and done whatever it takes to get through this!

So while we may not be able to get together in person this year, we look forward to a much brighter future.
While the pandemic and its effects are not over yet, we want you to know:
We are all winners and we salute everyone in this wonderful business!

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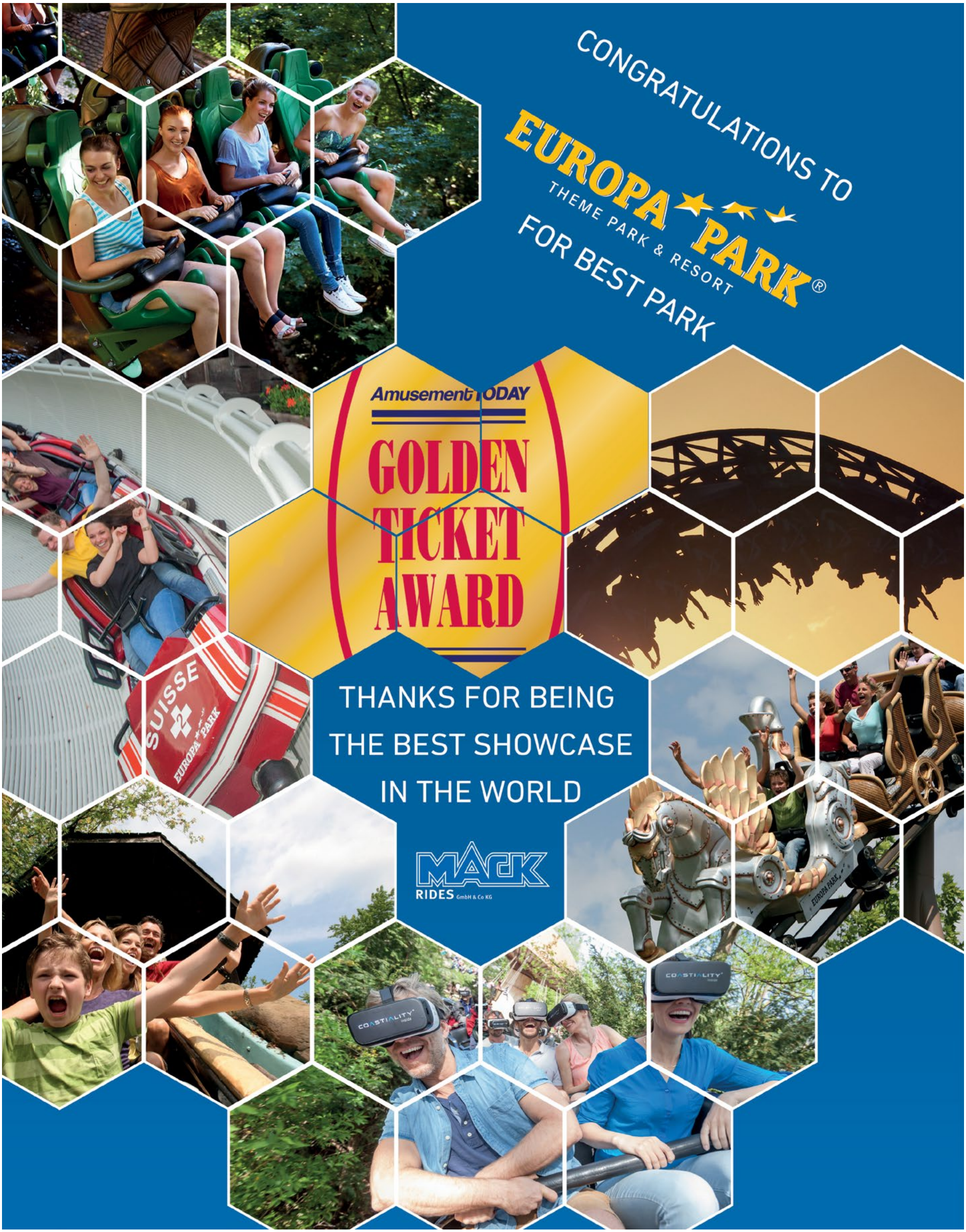
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Ride categories bring new Best Dark Ride winner, others repeat

Our experienced panelists have a passion for dark rides. In 2021, a new winner takes the Golden Ticket Award: **Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance** at **Disney's Hollywood Studios.**

"Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance is an immersive experience like you've never been on before, with fully realized blaster bolts in mid-air, holograms, and AT-ATs," said **John Larena**, executive creative director, **Walt Disney Imagineering**. "This is truly a 360-degree attraction."

Disney magic on the other side of the world comes in at No. 2. **Pirates of the Caribbean: Battle for the Sunken Treasure** at **Shanghai Disneyland**, the previous Golden Ticket winner, was also praised for its immersion.

Harry Potter and the Escape from Gringotts (No. 3) is new on the charts. This fusion of dark ride and roller coaster at **Universal Studios Orlando** is a ride concept that transcends typical definitions of a style of ride. Riders stop throughout the ride and are engaged with 3-D screens.

Twilight Zone Tower of Terror — also at Disney's Hollywood Studios and a previous Golden Ticket winner — still claims fans at No. 4. Newcomer **Reese's Cupfusion** (No. 5) at **Hersheypark** completes the finalists.

For **Best Water Ride**, **Valhalla** at **Blackpool Pleasure Beach** now has eight wins. Its first snag of the top prize was in 2003.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach Managing Director **Amanda Thompson** OBE was thrilled at the news: "Thank you for awarding Valhalla the Golden Ticket Award for Best Water Ride. We are currently reimagining Valhalla for the 2022 season and look forward to having everyone ride it next year."

Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance (above left) is a new Golden Ticket winner for Best Dark Ride. Wildwood Grove at Dollywood (above right) has a second consecutive win for Best Kids' Area. AT/DAVID FAKE; COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

Mystic River Falls (No. 2) at **Silver Dollar City** makes an impressive debut with its high rating. Opened during the global health crisis, this record-setting ride reimagined the entire River Town area of the park. A large new dining establishment created wonderful spectator views of the new attraction.

Universal's Islands of Adventure has taken the Golden Ticket for this category 12 times with **Dudley Do-right's Ripsaw Falls** (No. 3). It was the first ride to win the category when it was introduced in 2001.

Two flumes complete the list. **Chiapas** (No. 4), a massive multi-level flume ride at **Phantasialand**, lands on the chart in 2021. **Timber Mountain Log Ride**, a legendary — and elaborately themed — log flume at **Knott's Berry Farm** has been pleasing crowds dating back to 1969. In 2013, it reopened with a major thematic overhaul. Two additional animatronic figures were added in 2019 in honor of the ride's 50th anniversary. It is the park's most popular ride.

For **Best Water Park Ride**, **Wildebeest** at **Splashin' Safari**, **Holiday World**'s water park, has no intention of letting go of this award.

"I recently learned that when my father, **Will Koch Jr.**, first rode Wildebeest, he came back into the office and told a long-time co-worker and friend, 'We hit it out of the park with this one,'" said **Leah Koch,** fourth-generation owner and director of communications. "It brings our whole family such immense joy every year to see Wildebeest continue to hold strong at No. 1, and what a tribute to my father's legacy — who else could curate the perfect trio of wooden coasters and then build the best water park ride in the world for a decade? Of course, he had some help from the talented team at **ProSlide**, too! This is a partnership for the ages, and still such an honor with every win Wildebeest claims. Thank you to ProSlide, the voters, and our team who launched their one-millionth Wildebeest boat this season!"

Not only does Splashin' Safari take the gold, two other attractions in its waterslide arsenal are finalists as well: Mammoth (No. 3) and newcomer **Cheetah Chase** (No. 4), which is also a Golden Ticket Winner for **Best New Water Park Ride of 2020/2021**.

In second place is **Volcano Bay**'s enormous **Krakatau Aqua Coaster**. One of the longest water coasters ever built, this multi-person attraction zips riders in and out of the park's iconic volcano centerpiece with several thrilling drops.

Completing the list of finalists is **Schlitterbahn**'s **Master Blaster**. It was the first Golden Ticket winner in 1998 and took top honors 11 times.

Best Kids' Area finds **Dollywood** taking the Golden Ticket for the second time. The park opened Wildwood Grove in 2019 with a mix of rides for kids to ride with parents and play places all their own both indoors and out. The natural features of the Smoky Mountains lend atmosphere to the area with water features and numerous trees. The Wildwood Tree as the area's centerpiece lights up with hundreds of butterflies each night when darkness falls.

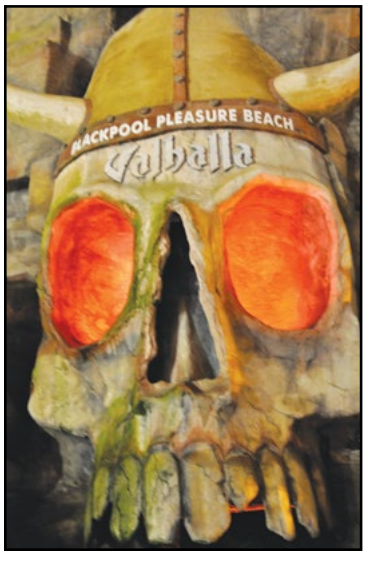
"Dolly shared a lot of her childhood daydreams and memories as Wildwood Grove was beginning to be developed," said **Pete Owens**, vice president of marketing. "It was her inspiration that really led to the amazing area you see now. Whether it was pretending to fly with dragonflies and mockingbirds or ride on the back of a black bear out into the Great Smoky Mountains — or just splashing and playing in the creeks and streams around her home — everything in Wildwood Grove really ties back to Dolly's memories of growing up in these beautiful mountains. We're glad that we've been able to incorporate all of this into an experience that our guests can enjoy and, hopefully, make those same memories with their families."

Kings Island was a long-reigning champ with its Camp Snoopy section. It still comes in strong in second place.

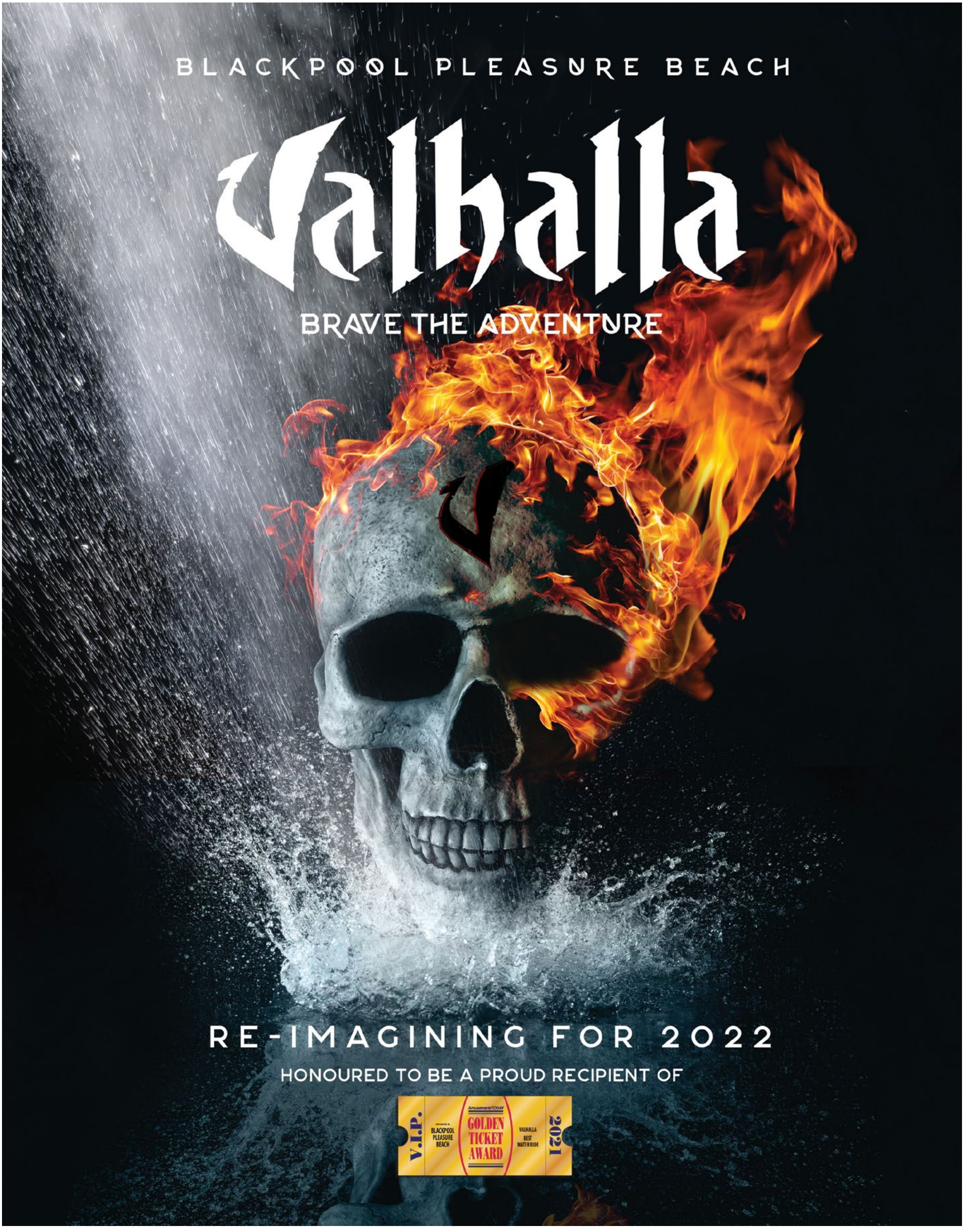
Sister park **Canada's Wonderland** (No. 3) also boasts three kids coasters, an abundance of children's and family rides and extraordinarily landscaped flower arrangements.

Storybook tales make for the thematic direction in a children's area within **Efteling** (No. 4) in The Netherlands. Rides, shows and interactive figures can entertain younger ones (along with parents) for a large portion of the visit. An infamous prop is a donkey that "poops" golden coins.

Finishing the category is **Paultons Park** (No. 5) in Hampshire, England, where the Peppa Pig World is a big hit with young and old.



Before undergoing a makeover for 2022, Blackpool Pleasure Beach's Valhalla (left) takes its eighth win. Wildebeest builds its double-digit Golden Ticket legacy with another win. COURTESY BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH; AT/TIM BALDWIN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The Gravity Group's precision cut track is Best Innovation of 2021

Amusement Today reached out to the amusement industry to nominate innovative ideas that move the industry forward, whether it be for safety, maintenance, cleanliness, marketing or guest experience. *AT* received numerous nominations. Industry professionals in the supplier and manufacturer sector, along with industry journalists, evaluated the nominations for their impact. From those results, the winner was declared for **Best Innovation of 2021**.

The Gravity Group, LLC has a passion for wooden roller coasters, whether breathing new life into existing, historic rides or developing the next generation of modern wooden coasters.

A common need worldwide within the theme park industry is the need for continued maintenance on wooden roller coasters. The Gravity Group has stepped up with a solution to reduce future maintenance and provide durability to wooden coasters.

More than 600 feet on each side of the outbound run on Kings Island's Racer used The Gravity Group's engineered precut track. COURTESY KINGS ISLAND

Most wooden roller coaster track is hand-cut onsite, sometimes at great heights and in difficult positions. This traditional construction method can introduce small imperfections to the shape and requires highly skilled carpenters to implement the ride design information into the final product.

The Gravity Group has created an alternative track system that is both economical and more exact. The new track system from The Gravity Group is made of wood, which the company feels preserves the integrity of a wooden roller coaster. The new engineered precut track is by design up to 30 times stronger than the traditional wooden roller coaster track. The track is precut at The Gravity Group facility by precision CNC equipment to

See INNOVATION, page 48

Best Innovation of 2021: Honorable Mentions

Ecological Laboratories, Microbe-Lift WR Water Treatment

The water in many water attractions can become dirty and contaminated. As a safer and more effective treatment than the standard chlorine, the Microbe-Lift WR contains live bacteria that attack and eliminate organic waste in water rides, ponds and lagoons. The treatment cleans water at higher and more efficient levels. The microbial technology is effective in the rapid reduction of organic waste in bulk water such as pollen, bird droppings and human waste, while promoting a reduction in intestinal pathogens (i.e. E Coli) and mitigates odor-related issues.

iSlide, Waterslide Sensory Products

Whether a brand new waterslide installation or a remarketing of an existing attraction, Netherlands-based iSlide creates a multi-sensory ride experience with projections, lighting, sound, touchpads and even smell.

With the addition of numerous special effects, a waterslide attraction is elevated to a world-class experience by becoming interactive and engaging the body's senses into the participation of riding, much like a theatrical show. This new approach is an ideal solution for after-market installations on attractions that have had diminished popularity over time.

LJM & Associates Inc. Inspection System

The LJM & Associates Inc. Inspection System offers state-of-the-art data collection necessary for a thorough audit of amusement parks, water parks, carnivals and sports and entertainment venues. Through a suite of customized iPad apps that provide checklists, questions, photos and more, inspectors can quickly and accurately gather data in the field and then generate notes and reports that can be emailed to clients in much less time. This 100% paperless data and reporting system saves time in the field resulting in overall safer ride operation while reducing paper waste to help parks go green.

The Microbe-Lift WR Water Treatment — developed by Ecological Laboratories — is a microbial technology that's effective in rapidly reducing organic waste in water attractions. COURTESY ECOLOGICAL LABORATORIES

ValoJump, Altitudes Trampoline Parks

ValoJump is an interactive trampoline game platform that boosts the trampolining experience like never seen before. ValoJump is a blend of augmented reality and trampoline fun. It allows kids to not only play a video game, but to become a part of the game as the system corresponds their jumps with real-time gameplay. ValoJump is fun for those playing but also for those watching as well as it becomes an attraction in itself. This activity is unique to Altitude Trampoline Park.

ZipWhipper

Taking climbing walls to the next level, the ZipWhipper combines ziplines with the climbing experience that not only allows people to challenge themselves with their best time, but it culminates into a thrill ride following the climb as participants are lifted and then swung out into a thrilling ride experience. Inventor Eric Cylvick likens it to a true climbing experience of rock climbers as it initiates a "lead fall." The variety of options, as well as the arrangement of units, bring aesthetics and efficiency to FECs. From an ADA standpoint, even those with limited body strength can still participate.

New concepts and ideas that move the industry forward are something that Amusement Today *wishes to promote. Know of something in development? Be sure to look for the nomination process next spring for Best Innovation of 2022.*

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THE GRAVITY GROUP modern wooden coasters

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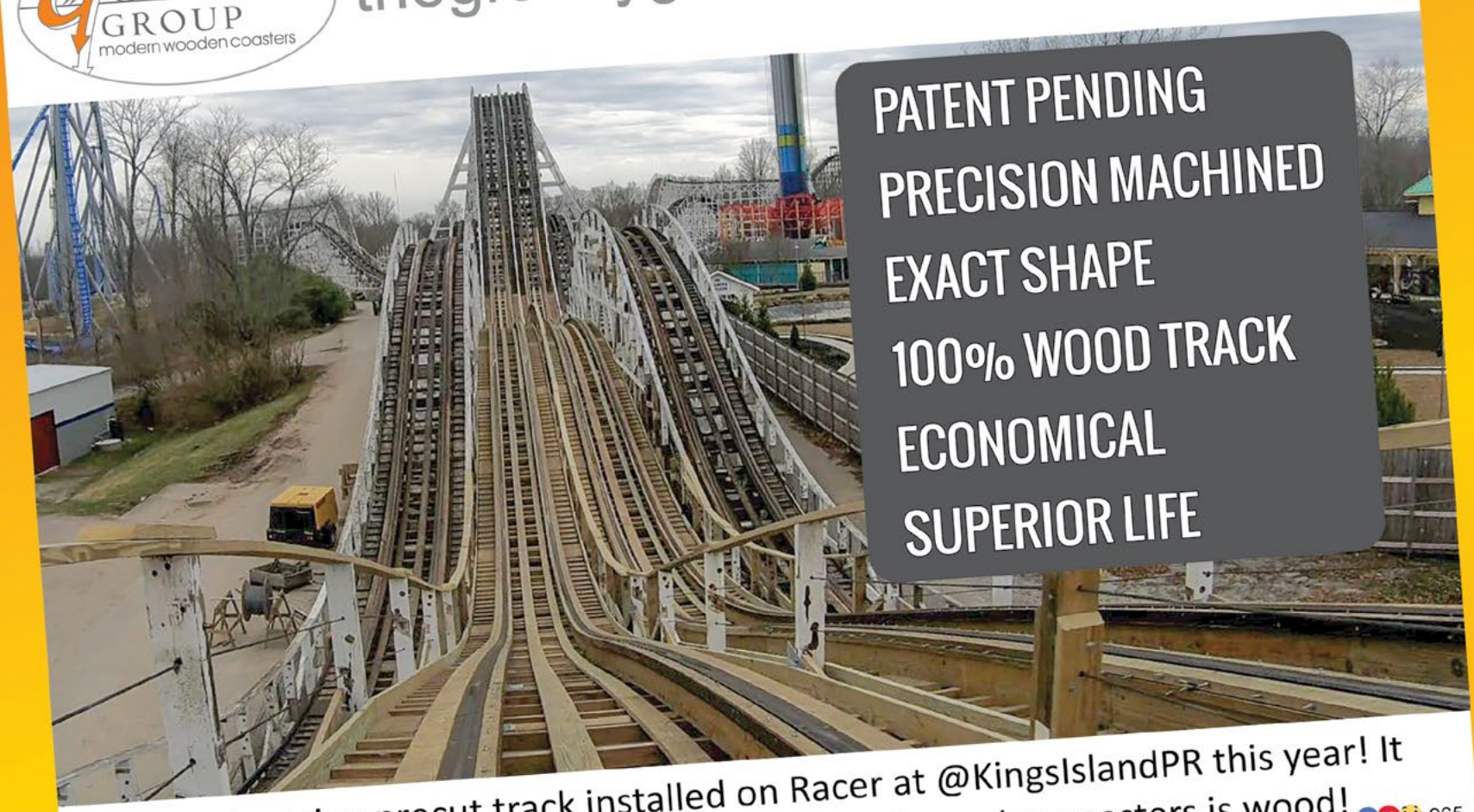

New engineering precut track installed on Racer at @KingsIslandPR this year! It is way smoother and longer lasting. The future of wooden coasters is wood! 965

The Racer is very smooth now after the retracking proving it doesn't need to be [redacted]'ed. It was a huge hit! 7

I love the history but didn't love the ride, figured I'd give it a go again with the sections being re-tracked and WOW! Super impressed. You guys killed it. Great job. 👏👍 7

I'm very impressed with Gravity Group's proprietary process to smooth this ride out. 4

I haven't been so happy to ride the Racer since I was a teenager. Very nice. It's smooth as glass now! 11

The Racer is much better than its ever been with the new tracking. Hats off to Kings Island on money well worth spent in my opinion. 👊😍😎🎉 21

It really is like getting a new ride this year. Rides amazing. 5

These are actual guest comments! 😮🎉

Names and photos have been changed to protect identies.

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INNOVATION

Continued from page 46

the exact shape determined by the ride design. The additional strength and precise shape ensure that the track will deliver smooth rides and indefinitely be maintenance-friendly. Additionally, this engineered precut track is economical and easy to install in prefabricated pieces with predictable, excellent results.

Six hundred feet of this track was installed on Kings Island's Racer in 2021.

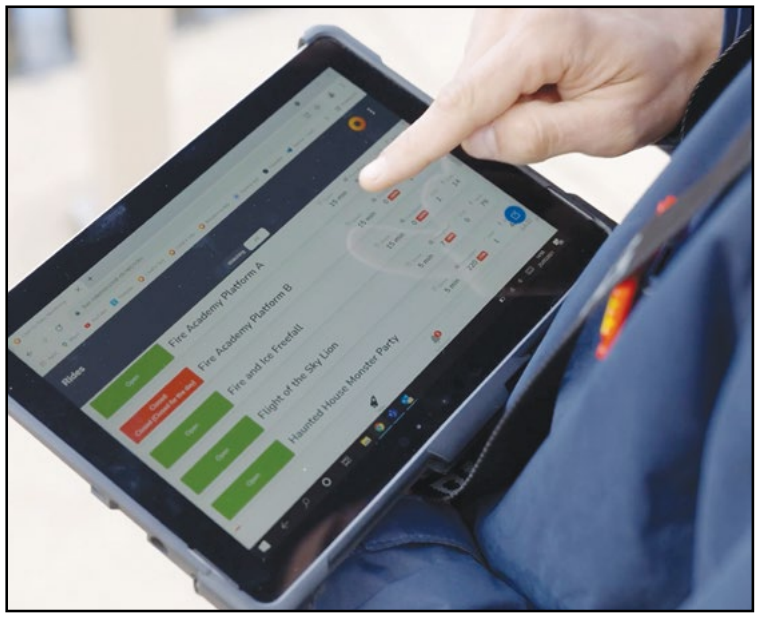
Placing second was **Clear Gear**. The newly developed Clear Gear disinfectant is applied as a liquid spray and left to air dry, making it ideal for higher capacity rides in which wiping down every seat could be inefficient. EPA-registered and non-bleach, the non-corrosive disinfectant kills 99.9% of germs (including COVID-19) while eliminating odors.

Partnered with Ride Entertainment, Clear Gear is making rides safer and improving the confidence of guests.

Two innovations tied for the third place position. One is from **Vekoma**, the other is **Cmd-Ctr**.

With flying coasters from various manufactures now running for 20 years, the new thinking exhibited on the installation of F.L.Y. at **Phantasialand** takes away the awkward and clumsy mechanics of previous versions. By twisting the track by 90 degrees, riders simply sit in their vehicle seats as on any normal roller coaster, and once dispatched, the track twists into the standard format placing riders into the flying position. Seats rotate forward for the ride experience, and then return to the upright position and track configuration for the ease of unloading and loading the next passengers. It is a far more comfortable position at the end of the ride on the brake run.

Pronounced "Command Control," **Cmd-Ctr** was created by **First Option Software**. The digital operations platform launched a new range of operational support apps which increases ride capacity and minimizes ride downtime. It provides instant insights to streamline operations. The system uses digitalization of paper-based workstreams to create strategic improvements across theme parks and other attractions. On its installation at **Legoland Windsor**, guests saw a 10 percent increase in rides they were able to enjoy during the visit.


Fire Academy Platform A
Fire Academy Platform B
Fire and Ice Freefall
Flight of the Sky Lion
Haunted House Monster Party

Loading and resting on the brake run in an upright position makes the boarding process of a flying coaster more efficient and more comfortable (above left). Cmd-Ctr's operations platform application increases ride capacity and minimizes downtime (above right). COURTESY PHANTASIALAND, FIRST OPTION SOFTWARE

Fury 325 reigns; Hersheypark, Phantasialand enter Top Ten of Steel

A lot is happening in the Top 25 chart for **Best Steel Coaster of 2020/2021**. Like watching singles move up and down the musical charts, steel coasters are jockeying for position in the rankings. With each new coaster being a contender, the ripple effect of that is hardcore fans must juggle their own top ten lists when voting.

Fury 325 (above left) took Best New Ride in 2015. Since then it has snagged the Golden Ticket for Best Steel Coaster, starting in 2016. Inset, Superman The Ride (No. 4). AT/GARY SLADE; TIM BALDWIN

Three new coasters find their place on the steel chart for the first time — well, four actually. **Dollywood**'s **Lightning Rod** was a perennial favorite on *AT*'s wooden coaster list for years, but with the park's recent transformation of the bulk of the ride to steel track, the mountain thriller screams in at No. 7 in its new identity. **Hersheypark**'s **Candymonium** makes an incredible debut at No. 5, the highest debut this year. Its one-year head start on **Jurassic World VelociCoaster** (No. 18) may have given it a nudge. The dinosaur-themed screamer at **Universal's Islands of Adventure** has opened to rave reviews. With four more major coasters opening in Central Florida in the next year or so, enthusiasts are sure to be heading there, and VelociCoaster's rise should be predictably fierce. **Steel Curtain** (No. 23) at **Kennywood** opened just slightly before voting closed in 2019. It lands on the chart this year.

It was a slower climb for **Taron** at **Phantasialand**. The 2016 **Intamin** launched coaster kept gathering fans and made that leap into the Top Ten for the first time. It makes for five Intamin coasters in the 10 top ranked slots. **Bolliger & Mabillard** (B&M) has three, and **Rocky Mountain Construction** (RMC) has two.

But what's at the top? Candymonium has its sweet entrance into the upper five spots, but **Fury 325** held on to the gold for yet a fifth designation. It is the tallest B&M coaster built to date.

"As **Carowinds**' new general manager, it's a special thrill to hear that Fury 325 is the No. 1 rated steel coaster in the world for the fifth time!" said **Manny Gonzalez**, Carowinds vice president and general manager. "It's gratifying to offer this intense and exhilarating ride to our guests who return for it year after year, and those who travel from around the globe to feel the sting."

Steel coasters Nos. 2 through 4 also remain the same. **Millennium Force** at **Cedar Point**, once a long-running Golden Ticket winner, still delivers a crowd-pleasing experience in the No. 2 spot with its 300-foot drop. The park's **Steel Vengeance** repeats at third, arguably the wildest coaster on the list, and the highest rated of RMC's four on the chart.

Six Flags New England has been in the Top Ten since **Superman: The Ride** (originally Superman Ride of Steel) debuted in 2000. Like Millennium Force, it also has taken the Golden Ticket for Best Steel Coaster. The Intamin hyper coaster holds a strong spot at No. 4.

Other Top Ten contenders include **Expedition GeForce** (No. 6) at Germany's **Holiday Park**, still the highest rated international coaster on the chart. **Leviathan** at **Canada's Wonderland** (No. 8) was B&M's first foray into the 300-foot category and one of 10 coasters from the Swiss firm on the chart, the most of any manufacturer. **Maverick** at Cedar Point rides in at No. 9, giving the Sandusky coaster capitol an impressive three steel coasters in the Top Ten, a feat no other park has ever done.

The oldest coaster still on the charts is **Six Flags Over Georgia**'s **Mind Bender** (No. 25). Currently wrapping up a thematic makeover into The Riddler's Mindbender, the Schwarzkopf looper opened in 1978. It is one of nine coasters on the chart that go upside down.

Contrary to wooden coasters, steel behemoths tend to score well with the "bigger is better" philosophy. Fifteen of the top 25 coasters feature heights or drops of more than 200 feet — four boast dimensions surpassing 300 feet.

With so much happening in the world of steel coasters, fans can see the change of positions of the 50 top steel coasters at GoldenTicketAwards.com.

Candymonium (No. 5). COURTESY JONATHAN HYMES

Millennium Force (No. 2). AT/TIM BALDWIN

Steel Vengeance (No. 3). AT/TIM BALDWIN

THE LIST

2021 TOP 25 STEEL ROLLER COASTERS

RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	SUPPLIER	YEAR
1	Fury 325	Carowinds	Charlotte, North Carolina	B&M	2015
2	Millennium Force	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	Intamin	2000
3	Steel Vengeance	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	Rocky Mountain	2018
4	Superman The Ride	Six Flags New England	Agawam, Massachusetts	Intamin	2000
5	Candymonium	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pennsylvania	B&M	2020
6	Expedition GeForce	Holiday Park	Hassloch, Germany	Intamin	2001
7	Lightning Rod	Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tennessee	Rocky Mountain	2016
8	Leviathan	Canada's Wonderland	Vaughan, Ontario, Canada	B&M	2012
9	Maverick	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	Intamin	2007
10	Taron	Phantasialand	Brühl, Germany	Intamin	2016
11	Apollo's Chariot	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Virginia	B&M	1999
12	Iron Rattler	Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	Rocky Mountain	2013
13	Intimidator 305	Kings Dominion	Doswell, Virginia	Intamin	2010
14	Nitro	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, New Jersey	B&M	2001
15	Phantom's Revenge	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pennsylvania	Morgan/Arrow	2001
16	Twisted Colossus	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, California	Rocky Mountain	2015
17	Mako	SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Florida	B&M	2016
18	Jurassic World VelociCoaster	Universal's Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Florida	Intamin	2021
19	Diamondback	Kings Island	Mason, Ohio	B&M	2009
20	Magnum XL-200	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	Arrow	1989
21	Alpengeist	Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Williamsburg, Virginia	B&M	1997
22	Montu	Busch Gardens Tampa Bay	Tampa, Florida	B&M	1996
23 tie	Intimidator	Carowinds	Charlotte, North Carolina	B&M	2010
23 tie	Steel Curtain	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pennsylvania	S&S	2019
25	Mind Bender	Six Flags Over Georgia	Austell, Georgia	Schwarzkopf	1978

View the Top 50 steel roller coasters at www.GoldenTicketAwards.com!

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Knoebel's Phoenix stays on track as the Best Wooden Coaster

Like the sound of a carousel calliope or the smell of cotton candy, the roar of the wooden rails possesses an energy that embodies nostalgia within the amusement industry. Among rides of all kinds, the wooden coaster is scrutinized by park connoisseurs above all others.

Without the core categories being voted on in 2020, aficionados wondered how their beloved wooden coasters would hold up — both during the pandemic and on the charts.

More victorious than ever, **Phoenix** at **Knoebels Amusement Resort** soared to the No. 1 spot.

"This is the third time Phoenix has received this honor, but we are just as excited as the first!" said **Dick Knoebel**, owner. "We often reflect on the incredible history of this roller coaster, but even more so this year as we remember **Charlie Dinn**, who helped us bring Phoenix back to life."

Phoenix takes Best Wood Coaster for a third time.
AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

The Beast (No. 5).
COURTESY
KINGS ISLAND

Dinn's expertise was involved in the process of relocating **The Rocket** from **Playland Park** in San Antonio in the mid-1980s. He passed away this summer. Many industry "experts" told Knoebel that a relocation couldn't successfully be done. As he has gone on to do so many times since, he proved them wrong. Dubbed the Phoenix at its opening in 1985, the wooden coaster has been championed as the quintessential ride to exemplify the best in wooden coasters. Another distinction is that the ride is one of only two wooden roller coasters that have placed in the Top Ten every year in more than two decades of Golden Ticket Awards.

The five highest rated coasters on the charts keep their rankings from 2019. Nos. 2 through 4 have all claimed the top spot winning the Golden Ticket at some point in their career. **The Voyage** at **Holiday World**, built

See WOOD, page 55

▶WOOD

Continued from page 55

by **The Gravity Group**, pushed boundaries when it opened in 2006, considered by some as the most outrageous wooden coaster ever built. **El Toro** from **Intamin** at **Six Flags Great Adventure** introduced incredibly steep drops and extreme airtime to the wooden genre. **Boulder Dash** at **Lake Compounce** makes use of mountainous terrain to deliver one of the most signature rides on the planet. It was produced by **Custom Coasters International**.

In fifth, **The Beast** at **Kings Island** not only is the other remaining woodie to have landed in the Top Ten every single year, but also shares in being an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark with Phoenix.

Kings Island is the only park to have two wooden coasters in the Top Ten. **Mystic Timbers** (No. 6) climbs up four notches, grabbing even more fans each year since opening in 2017.

Likewise, while having opened in 1998, after a massive makeover by **Great Coasters International, Inc**. (GCII) in recent years, **GhostRider** at **Knott's Berry Farm** (No. 7) has become the park favorite. In addition to the GCII handiwork here, the

El Toro (No. 3).
AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

company's designs are found on six other coasters on the chart.

Ravine Flyer II (No. 8), a Top Ten staple, put **Waldameer Park** on the map in 2008. A product of **The Gravity Group,** the highway-leaping woodie was a long-time effort to gain approval from city officials.

Outlaw Run (No. 9) at **Silver Dollar City** is the only woodie in the Top Ten with inversions and one of only two on the chart. **Wildfire** at **Kolmården** (No. 18) is the other. Both are built by **Rocky Mountain Construction**.

Moving up a notch, **Thunderhead** (No. 10) at **Dollywood** — a previous Golden Ticket winner — completes the Top Ten. Part of this return was made possible by the switch of the park's **Lightning Rod** to the steel chart with a retracking project in the last season, which created a space to move up.

While newer wooden coasters can claim their places on the chart, enthusiasts tend to favor classics as well. Nine of the woodies on the chart are from the previous century. The oldest is **Kennywood**'s **Jack Rabbit**, hopping up to No. 14. The classic celebrated a 100th birthday last season. Also making a big leap is one of the most famous coasters of all, **Cyclone** at **Luna Park** in New York. Having just slipped off the list of 25 in 2019, the 1927 icon surges back to the No. 13 spot.

Boulder Dash (No. 4).
COURTESY
LAKE COMPOUNCE

The Voyage (No. 2).
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2021 TOP 25 WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS

RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	SUPPLIER	YEAR
1	Phoenix	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pennsylvania	Dinn-PTC/Schmeck	1985
2	Voyage	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Indiana	The Gravity Group	2006
3	El Toro	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, New Jersey	Intamin	2006
4	Boulder Dash	Lake Compounce	Bristol, Connecticut	Custom Coasters Int.	2000
5	Beast	Kings Island	Mason, Ohio	KECO	1979
6	Mystic Timbers	Kings Island	Mason, Ohio	Great Coasters Int.	2017
7	GhostRider	Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, California	Custom Coasters/GCII	1998
8	Ravine Flyer II	Waldameer	Erie, Pennsylvania	The Gravity Group	2008
9	Outlaw Run	Silver Dollar City	Branson, Missouri	Rocky Mountain	2013
10	Thunderhead	Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tennessee	Great Coasters Int.	2004
11	Lightning Racer	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pennsylvania	Great Coasters Int.	2000
12	Gold Striker	California's Great America	Santa Clara, California	Great Coasters Int.	2013
13 tie	Cyclone	Luna Park/Coney Island	Brooklyn, New York	Baker/Keenan	1927
13 tie	Jack Rabbit	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pennsylvania	Miller	1920
15	Troy	Toverland	Sevenum, the Netherlands	Great Coasters Int.	2007
16	Balder	Liseberg	Gothenburg, Sweden	Intamin	2003
17 tie	Raven	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Indiana	Custom Coasters Int.	1995
17 tie	Wildfire	Kolmården	Norrköping, Sweden	Rocky Mountain	2016
19	Thunderbolt	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pennsylvania	Vettel/Miller	1968
20	Comet	Great Escape	Lake George, New York	PTC/Schmeck	1994
21	Shivering Timbers	Michigan's Adventure	Muskegon, Michigan	Custom Coasters Int.	1998
22	Boardwalk Bullet	Kemah Boardwalk	Kemah, Texas	The Gravity Group/M&V	2007
23	Wodan	Europa-Park	Rust, Germany	Great Coasters Int.	2012
24	Legend	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Indiana	Custom Coasters Int.	2000
25	Colossos	Heide Park	Soltau, Germany	Intamin	2001

View the Top 50 wooden roller coasters at www.GoldenTicketAwards.com!

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